Groups kick off Marianas Village Pride campaign. PAGE 2
Torres backs scholarships for behavioral health students. PAGE 11

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

$1

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 199

www.saipantribune.com THURSDAY OCTOBER 7, 2021 www.facebook.com/saipantribune

READY, SET, GO!
MARK RABAGO
Runners in the boys 12U division take off from the starting line of the 2021 PSS/NMA Cross Country Championships held last Saturday at old Saipan Country Club golf course behind Saipan Vegas.

Task force is created for NMI Universal Garbage Collection

Torres

Task force will address problems with trash, littering, illegal dumping

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has created a CNMI Universal Garbage Collection Task Force to address problems with trash, littering, and illegal dumping in the Commonwealth.

Speaking a radio press briefing last Friday, Torres disclosed that he recently signed an executive order that creates the task force that will look into the trash problem on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, and come up with a universal plan that will address the garbage collection issue.

The governor hopes to have the task force formed

See TASK on Page 4

Nearly 530 households will get smart meters

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

About 529 households in the CNMI are scheduled to have their Cashpower meters replaced with Nighthawk meters as part of an ongoing meter migration for households that connect to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. through a prepay meter.

According to Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Gary Camacho last Tuesday, this meter migration actually started last year, with the Nighthawk meters having a number of advanced features such as being able to read meters remotely and allowing customers to connect to the meter on their personal devices through Wi-Fi anywhere in the world to monitor usage and their monthly bills remotely.

By island, 386 households on Saipan, four on Tinian, and 139 on Rota will see their meters changed to the more ad-

See NEARLY on Page 4

COVID deaths eclipse 700K in US as delta variant rages

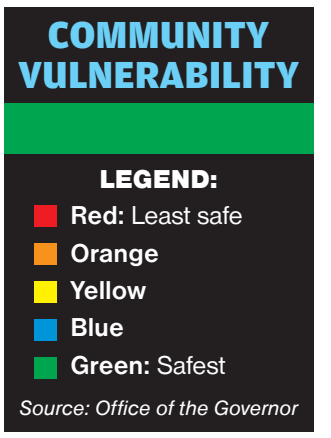
By TAMMY WEBBER and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's a milestone that by all accounts didn't have to happen this soon.

The U.S. death toll from COVID-19 eclipsed 700,000

See COVID on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY



Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:24pm, Oct.6, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: 82.5%

Days since last community transmission: 196

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	30,145
Fully Vaccinated:	29,481
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,869
Fully Vaccinated:	4,655
Janssen	
Fully Vaccinated:	814

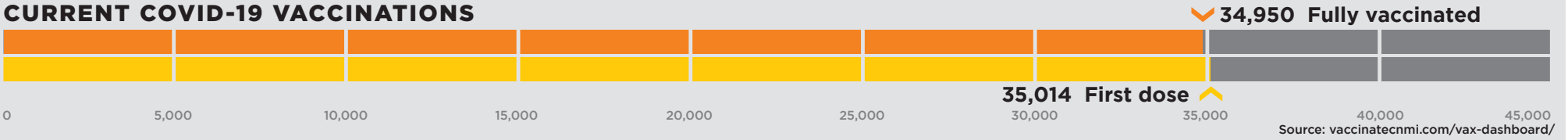
GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	15,465	324[1]	15,789
Recovered	13,038	89	13,127
Active	2,128	324	2,452
Deaths	204	6[2]	210

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	272	0	272
Traced via Travel Screening	235	0	235
Traced via Community Screening	37	0	37
Deaths	2	0	2

[1]10/6=159; 10/5=165 | [2]10-6=2; 10/5=4

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

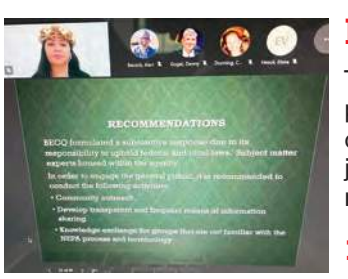


Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

LOCAL
A sunset fun run closed out the celebration of World Tourism Day in the Marianas.
PAGE 12

BUSINESS
Opening the Maranatha Christian Store is a dream come true for Claire Javillonar.
PAGE 13



ENVIRONMENT
The CNMI takes part in a webinar on environmental justice in NEPA reviews.
PAGE 14

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

In this combo photo, Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang talks to members and officials of Rotaract and its partners, while volunteers pick up trash during a village cleanup drive in Chalan Kanoa last Saturday.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In this combo photo, Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang and staff Jack Villagomez pose for the camera after checking the workers-volunteers, who are seen here painting the medians along the Atkins Kroll intersection in San Jose last Saturday in support of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Adopt-A-Median initiative.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Groups kick off Marianas Village Pride campaign

The community spirit was in full display last weekend as various groups worked on the medians along a major roadway on Saipan and cleaned areas in the southern part of the island.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang and the Saipan Mayor's Office staff cleaned and painted medians in San Jose at the Atkins Kroll Toyota intersection on Oct. 2 and teamed up with the Rotaract Club of Saipan for a village cleanup in Chalan Kanoa.

Apatang said the proper maintenance of the medians is critical to ensuring the safety of motorists and pedestrians while contributing to the Marianas' overall beautification efforts. The Saipan Mayor's Office committed to the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Adopt-A-Median initiative by adopting the third median project under the program. Shirley's Coffee Shop/Shirley's Football Club, the Northern Marianas College, and Life in The Son Christian Fellowships have also committed to adopting medians on Saipan. Apatang calls on organizations and businesses to follow suit.

The Adopt-A-Median program was launched on Oct. 4 as part of GCEA's Marianas Village Pride campaign, which rallies the community to take ownership and responsibility in transforming all villages throughout the Marianas through fun beautification activities and contests.

GCEA thanks Apatang, his team, the Rotaract organization, and its partners for helping to launch the MVP and Adopt-A-Median campaigns.

Schools, groups, families, and businesses can paint medians, sidewalks, or crosswalks in their villages. Students will earn service hours for their participation. GCEA will provide the paint and supplies, and the project can be completed in an afternoon or weekend. Email gceacnmi@gmail.com or visit the MVP website for more information. ***(PR)***

Rotaract's pilot village cleanup project obtains broad support

More than 50 individuals from Saipan Southern High School, Marianas High School, Saipan International School, and Kagman High School Interact, NMC First Army Officer Club, Northern Marianas College, and the Saipan Mayor's Office Dog Control Program joined the Rotaract's pilot cleanup drive last Oct. 2, cleaning the roads surrounding William S. Reyes Elementary School and from Susupe Lake to Sugar Dock beachside.

The turnout was unexpected, according to Rotaract president Richard Baleares. "A major challenge that Rotaract anticipated was the number of volunteers who would show up. I was surprised and delighted at the turnout on the day of the cleanup. Leading up to the weekend, we had only a handful of people, and

See Rotaract's on next page

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ROTARACT'S

From Page 2

I thought we'd be lucky to get more than six on the day of the cleanup. With the strong turnout, we were able to cover a lot of ground, picked up more trash, and got the job done faster than expected," said Baleares.

"Residents were also surprised to see the mass of volunteers cleaning in their villages," said Joann Aquino, director of operations for the Saipan Mayor's Office. "We didn't expect such a large group of young volunteers from other organizations besides the Rotaract to take part in this cleanup. It was amazing to see them show up with passion and commitment to do something good to benefit the village of Chalan Kanoa, regardless of whether they live there or not. Our youth are taking action today to preserve their environment for tomorrow, and what they are doing is very empowering!"

The group collected 1,040 lbs of garbage during the cleanup. Volunteers noted their appreciation for the acknowledgment they received from residents, who were waving at them, honking their horns, and rolling their windows down to thank them. Rotaract and its partners also encourage the community to play an active role in taking care of all villages in the Marianas.

"We have been privileged to call these beautiful islands our home and we should not take it for granted," Baleares said. "We all play a part in keeping our islands clean, and we must work together in doing so. It will benefit us all in the end. Even the smallest acts, such as not littering, removing stray trash, disposing of garbage properly, and keeping personal areas clean can go a long way toward a cleaner Marianas."

Baleares noted that after the success of the Chalan Kanoa cleanup, Rotaract will be planning projects for other villages.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang praised the volunteers and renewed his call for support to the Marianas Village Pride campaign. "We live in a unique time and are facing unique challenges—from a pandemic with devastating consequences to threats from climate change. For us to survive and thrive, we need to act together," said Apatang. "A clean environment is essential for healthy living. We should all take ownership and responsibility for keeping our islands clean and beautiful. My office can only do so much, and we can all change the way we think and take pride in where we live. I humbly ask the entire community to come together and bring back their village pride."

For more information about the Adopt-A-Median and Marianas Village Pride Campaign, visit the GCEA website at cnmieconomy.com or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com. GCEA invites the community to engage, like, and share its MVP content on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmieconomy) and to tag MVP-related photos to be featured on GCEA's platforms (#BeAnMVP, #MarianasVillagePride, and #TogetherWeCanMarianas). ***(PR)***

IPI ordered to explain why it shouldn't be cited for contempt

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has ordered Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC to appear in court today to explain why it should not be found in contempt for its alleged incompliance with the consent decree to pay former employees who claim they were sexually harassed while they were working for the company

Chief Judge Ramona Manglona ordered IPI to appear before the court today to show cause as to why it should not be held in contempt of court for violating the April 27, 2021, consent decree with the U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and why it should not be ordered to purge itself of contempt.

"According to EEOC, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC [and] Imperial Pacific International Holdings Limited have not complied with the April 27, 2021, consent decree. Specifically, the EEOC alleges that to date defendants have only made the first three monthly payments and have been delinquent in making the August and September payments. According to counsel for the EEOC, he has contacted defendants' counsel on numerous occasions, both in writing and telephonically, but has not secured defendants' compliance with the consent decree. For good cause shown, the court orders that IPI appear before the court," Manglona said.

In EEOC's motion to find IPI in contempt, to EEOC counsel Eric Yau said that IPI violated a specific and definite order of the court when it failed to fully comply with its obligations concerning monetary relief required in the decree.

"Specifically, Imperial Pacific was obligated to pay a total of $105,000 to claimants. To date, defendants have only paid $60,000, and have been delinquent with the monthly payment of $15,000 for August and September," Yau stated.

The EEOC sued IPI on Sept. 24, 2019, for sexual harassment and unfair employment practices on behalf of a former VIP hostess and other female employees. EEOC alleged that IPI subjected the claimants to unwelcome physical and verbal sexual harassment by male patrons.

IPI denied all the allegations and asked the court to rule in its favor and dismiss the complaint with prejudice.

In April 2021, IPI agreed to settle the claims and resolve the lawsuit. It entered into a consent decree that was approved by the court on April 27, 2021.

COVID

From Page 1

late Friday—a number greater than the population of Boston. The last 100,000 deaths occurred during a time when vaccines—which overwhelmingly prevent deaths, hospitalizations and serious illness—were available to any American over the age of 12.

The milestone is deeply frustrating to doctors, public health officials and the American public, who watched a pandemic that had been easing earlier in the summer take a dark turn. Tens of millions of Americans have refused to get vaccinated, allowing the highly contagious delta variant to tear through the country and send the death toll from 600,000 to 700,000 in 3 1/2 months.

Florida suffered by far the most death of any state during that period, with the virus killing about 17,000 residents since the middle of June. Texas was second with 13,000 deaths. The two states account for 15% of the country's population, but more than 30% of the nation's deaths since the nation crossed the 600,000 threshold.

Dr. David Dowdy, an infectious disease epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health who has analyzed publicly reported state data, said it's safe to say at least 70,000 of the last 100,000 deaths were in unvaccinated people. And of those vaccinated people who died with breakthrough infections, most caught the virus from an unvaccinated person, he said.

"If we had been more effective in our vaccination, then I think it's fair to say, we could have prevented 90% of those deaths," since mid-June, Dowdy said.

"It's not just a number on a screen," Dowdy said. "It's tens of thousands of these tragic stories of people whose families have lost someone who means the world to them."

Danny Baker is one of them.

The 28-year-old seed hauler from Riley, Kansas, contracted COVID-19 over the summer, spent more than a month in the hospital and died Sept. 14. He left behind a wife and a 7-month-old baby girl.

"This thing has taken a grown man, 28-year-old young man, 6'2", 300-pound man, and took him down like it was nothing," said his father, 56-year-old J.D. Baker, of Milford, Kansas. "And so if young people think that they're still ... protected because of their youth and their strength, it's not there anymore."

In the early days of the pandemic, Danny Baker, who was a championship trap shooter in high school and loved hunting and fishing, insisted he would be first in line for a vaccine, recalled his mother.

But just as vaccinations opened up to his age group, the U.S. recommended a pause in use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to investigate reports of rare but potentially dangerous blood clots. The news frightened him, as did information swirling online that the vaccine could harm fertility, though medical experts say there's no biological reason the shots would affect fertility.

His wife also was breastfeeding, so they decided to wait. Health experts now say breastfeeding mothers should get the vaccine for their own protection and that it may even provide some protection for their babies through antibodies passed along in breastmilk.

"There's just a lot of miscommunication about the vaccine," said his wife, 27-year-old Aubrea Baker, a labor and delivery nurse, adding that her husband's death inspired a Facebook page and at least 100 people to get vaccinated. "It's not that we weren't going to get it. We just hadn't gotten it yet."

When deaths surpassed 600,000 in mid-June, vaccinations already were driving down caseloads, restrictions were being lifted and people looked forward to life returning to normal over the summer. Deaths per day in the U.S. had plummeted to an average of around 340, from a high of over 3,000 in mid-January. Soon afterward, health officials declared it a pandemic of the unvaccinated.

But as the delta variant swept the country, caseloads and deaths soared—especially among the unvaccinated and younger people, with hospitals around the country reporting dramatic increases in admissions and deaths among people under 65. They also reported breakthrough infections and deaths, though at far lower rates, prompting efforts to provide booster shots to vulnerable Americans.

Now, daily deaths are averaging about 1,900 a day. Cases have started to fall from their highs in September but there is fear that the situation could worsen in the winter months when colder weather drives people inside.

In a statement Saturday, President Joe Biden lamented what he called the "painful milestone" of 700,000 COVID-19 deaths and said that "we must not become numb to the sorrow."

He renewed his pitch for people to get vaccinated, saying the country has "made extraordinary progress" against the coronavirus over the past eight months thanks to the vaccines.

"It can save your life and the lives of those you love," Biden said. "It will help us beat COVID-19 and move forward, together, as one nation."

Almost 65% of Americans have had at least one dose of vaccine, while about 56% are fully vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But millions are either refusing or still on the fence because of fear, misinformation and political beliefs. Health care workers report being threatened by patients and community members who don't believe COVID-19 is real.

The first known deaths from the virus in the U.S. were in early February 2020. It took four months to reach the first 100,000 deaths. During the most lethal phase of the disaster, in the winter of 2020-21, it took just over a month to go from 300,000 to 400,000 deaths.

The U.S. reached 500,000 deaths in mid-February, when the country was still in the midst of the winter surge and vaccines were only available to a limited number of people. The death toll stood about 570,000 in April when every adult American became eligible for shots.

"I remember when we broke that 100,000-death mark, people just shook their heads and said 'Oh, my god,'" said Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association. "Then we said, 'Are we going to get to 200,000?' Then we kept looking at 100,000-death marks," and finally surpassed the estimated 675,000 American deaths from the 1918-19 flu pandemic.

"And we're not done yet," Benjamin said.

TASK

From Page 1

this week, with a chairperson to be known by tomorrow, Friday.

"Our goal is to have a universal trash collection formula for the entire CNMI. We are excited for that," Torres said.

Ultimately, he said, they want to make use of the landfill the right way, have as much product as possible recycled, and possibly harness the transformation of waste to energy in the long term.

The governor said the creation of the task force is one of the recommendations of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors.

Torres stated in the order that the establishment of a universal garbage collection system for the CNMI will establish greater efficiencies and ameliorate the harmful practice of littering and illegal dumping.

Under the executive order, the CNMI Universal Garbage Collection Task Force shall convene and work toward the creation of a collection system that will provide for greater efficiencies in the collection of solid waste among the villages and businesses in the Commonwealth.

The system will provide for community receptacles, and establish greater efficiencies among private operators in the solid waste collection services.

The task force shall be composed of professional individuals and government officials from both the public and private sectors.

Torres said all departments, divisions, offices, government corporations, board, and commissions of the government appointed to the task force shall assign a representative from their respective offices to participate in meetings and activities carried out by the task force necessary to achieve its missions.

The task force will consist of the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., and Office of Planning and Development. Additional government agencies may be added from time to time and as deemed necessary by the task force chairman.

Invited and requested to be members of the task force are the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors, Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Hotel Association of the NMI, and Office of the Attorney General.

Torres said the task force is responsible for reviewing existing plans, studies, and recommendations for the establishment of a Universal Garbage Collection system for the CNMI.

He said the task force is also responsible for reviewing best practices in the region and the U.S. mainland and will be providing written plans and recommendations to the Governor's Office, which shall include any changes necessary to CNMI laws, regulations, or policies.

Torres coted a Solid Waste Management Feasibility Study that DPW published in 2019, which found that the present structure of solid waste management in the CNMI lacks centralized control and planning for the development of an integrated solid waste management system. This study provided a set of recommendations and best practices for enhancing the effectiveness of the CNMI's solid waste management system.

Torres said this study, along with recommendations from the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors and the Office of Planning and Development, have highlighted the need for a long-term coordinated effort to support growth of the solid waste management system and to ameliorate the negative repercussions of littering and environmental degradation.

He said while the Office of Planning and Development, with the support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has established the Inter-Island Solid Waste Management Task Force, more immediate actions can be taken to increase coordination, integration, and inter-agency collaboration.

Torres said poor accessibility to solid waste disposal services and the overall inefficiency of the solid waste management system plays a significant role in the proliferation of illegal dumping and littering, resulting in the degradation of the CNMI's environment and a poor image for the Commonwealth's tourist-based economy.

NEARLY

From Page 1

vanced Nighthawk meters.

These were learned soon after CUC's Cashpower token generating equipment at its Dandan office went down last Friday, which resulted in many prepay customers being unable to purchase prepaid meter tokens.

Camacho said that CUC was able to reinstate power for many customers and CUC will continue to reinstate power for many other households affected by the Cashpower token equipment failure until all meters are addressed.

In an Oct. 4 news statement, CUC explained that households equipped with Cashpower meters need prepaid tokens to remain operational. With the Cashpower token equipment going down last Friday, many customers were unable to purchase tokens, and as a result, lost power. To address this issue, CUC said its team of meter inspectors worked late last Friday night to switch out the token-based Cashpower meters with web-based Nighthawk smart meters.

Camacho said Tuesday the cause of the equipment failure of the Cashpower token generating equipment "is being looked into."

For more information, CUC asks its customers to call its hotline at 236-4333 or visit its Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation for updates.

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CEC designates Multi-Purpose Center as polling site for early voting

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Election Commission has designated the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center as the polling venue for the special election's seven-day early voting that will start this Saturday, Oct. 9.

CEC executive director Kayla S. Igitol said yesterday that the commission has also designated the polling places for the Oct. 16 special election.

Igitol said voters must ensure that they bring with them an identification card with picture as they will be required to present it in order to be issued a ballot at the polling sites.

For the early voting, the voting hours will be from 8:30am to 4pm. The early voting, which includes Sunday, will end on Oct. 15.

For the special election day, the designated polling places are:

- Oleai Elementary School cafeteria for Precinct 3A (San Jose).
- Garapan Elementary School cafeteria for Precincts 3B-1 (Garapan) and 3B-2 (Garapan).

Igitol said the polling places for the special election day will open at 7am and close at 7pm.

The special election is being held to fill the House of Representatives Precinct 3 seat left vacant by the sudden passing of representative Ivan A. Blanco last July 23.

Corina L. Magofna of the NMI Democratic Party, and Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae of the NMI Republican Party, are the only candidates.

6 COVID-related deaths in Guam

Six more COVID-19-related deaths were reported in Guam, with two death occurring yesterday, Oct. 6, 2021, three deaths occurring between Sept. 17 and Oct. 4, and one death last year determined to have been COVID-19-related after a review of past records. Guam's COVID-19-related total is adjusted to 208.

The Joint Information Center in Guam also reported that there are currently 60 active hospitalizations in Guam due to COVID-19. Of the 60, 35 are unvaccinated.

Guam's 205th COVID-19-related death was an unvaccinated 72-year-old female with underlying health conditions. She tested positive for COVID-19 on Oct. 3 and was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Regional Medical City on Oct. 3.

The 206th was an unvaccinated 63-year-old male with underlying health conditions. He was a known positive case and was pronounced dead at the GRMC on Oct. 4.

The 207th was a vaccinated 82-year-old male with underlying health conditions. He was a known positive case and was pronounced dead at the GRMC on Sep. 17.

The 208th was a 68-year-old female with underlying health conditions. She was pronounced dead at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Oct. 31, 2020, and the JIC reported that a COVID-19 vaccine was not available at this time.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

Man allegedly wanted to be arrested

The Department of Public Safety arrested a man who purposely destroyed objects at a bar to get the police attention because he allegedly wanted to get arrested.

Last Monday, at around 5:37pm, DPS officers arrested habitual offender Zeric Gant, 22, at Relox Bar in Garapan after he threw a fit and damaged property because he said he wanted to get arrested.

During a bail hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan imposed a $1,000 cash bail on Gant and remanded him back to Department of Corrections custody.

He was ordered to return to court on Oct. 18 to be arraigned before Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja.

During the court proceedings, it was found that Gant was on probation for a crime involving assault and battery that he pleaded guilty to back in December 2020.

According to a police report, police responded to a criminal mischief report at around 5:35pm last Monday at the Relox Bar.

At the scene, police were immediately greeted by Gant who held both his hands out above his head and told police to arrest him and waste no time doing so.

"Arrest me now, I want to go to jail. That's why I broke those things," Gant told responding officers, who handcuffed him and brought him to the Department of Corrections.

During a preliminary investigation the following day, Oct. 5, DPS officers interviewed a witness named Benjawan Shuman, an employee at the nearby Sawadee Massage establishment.

She told police that she locked herself inside the massage establishment along with two other colleagues because they were afraid of Gant whom they saw shouting outside.

The witness said Gant was also kicking and hitting the walls of the nearby establishments and even kicked a street sign. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
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CONTINUATION OF BOARD MEETING (09/29/21)
Friday, October 8, 2021
9:00 a.m. @ NMTI Facility, Lower Base

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Adoption of Agenda
III. Adoption of Meeting Minutes:
  a. August 19, 2021 – BoT Special Meeting
  b. September 9, 2021 – Nomination Committee Meeting
IV. Public Comments
V. Old Business
  a. Nomination Committee Process – Proposal to Adopt to Policy
  b. Schedule of Fees – Proposal to Adopt to Policy
  c. Trades Adult High School/ NMC ABE Updates
  d. CEO Appraisal forms from BoT Members
  e. Survey with Instructors Updates
VI. New Business
  a. Kick Off Ceremony Planning Updates
  b. Free classes for NMTI Staff – Proposal for Policy
  c. Work I Office Hours – Proposal for Policy
  d. E-Signatures for Signatories – Proposal for Policy
VII. Executive Session
VIII. Adjourn

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB21-CHCC/IT-003
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 18, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"SWITCHES FOR CHCC INTERFACILITY NETWORK UPGRADE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS INVITAITON TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP21-CHCC/CGC-SOC-003
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 18, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"ROTA OFFICE LEASE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
MVA-RFP-21-2024

Marianas Visitors Authority Representation, Promotional and Public Relations Services for the TAIWAN MARKET

Submission /Closing Date: **October 25, 2021** Time: **3:00PM (ChST)**

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after September 22, 2021 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, during the hours of 8:00AM to 5:00PM ChST, Monday through Friday, except holidays. The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference **"MVA - RFP -21- 2024 - MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY REPRESENTATION, PROMOTIONAL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES FOR THE TAIWAN MARKET".**

Proposals submitted from individuals outside the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or certified Courier mail service on or before October 25, 2021 and must be received within seven (7) working days of that date. Proposers from outside the CNMI must notify the MVA Procurement Officer Ms. Lenette F. Maratita in writing of their intent to submit in order to receive the additional seven (7) working days for the receipt of the actual Proposal Documents. This notice of intent may be submitted by any mode of written communication including facsimile to +1-670-664-3237 or emailed to lmaratita@mymarianas.com and must be received no later than 3:00PM, Chamorro Standard Time (ChST) on October 15, 2021.

/s/ Gloria C. Cavanagh
Acting Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Priscilla M. Iakopo
Managing Director, MVA

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM | WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CURRENCY EXCHANGE SERVICES
FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Project No.: CPA-RFP-001-21
CPA Concession No.: SCX-2021-01

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of the Request for Proposals (the "RFP"), and other contract provisions, for proposals from firms, companies, and/or corporations for currency exchange services at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. This concession is for the exclusive right to offer currency exchange, travel insurance, and other related services as applicable, including, but not limited to, the sale and purchase of foreign currency banknotes, drafts, money transfer, travelers check, and any other travel related products that are not related products precluded by other concessionaire agreements in the Airport.

The RFP will be issued and available for pick-up beginning **October 07, 2021**, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, at the Administration Office, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport. CPA offices are closed on holidays. The RFP includes layouts and requirements. All responses to this RFP shall also take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged to the proposer awarded the contract for the project. Prospective proposers will be required to pay a non-refundable administrative fee of $50.00 for costs associated with handling and consideration of the proposal. Payments are accepted in the form of cash, credit card, and certified cashier's checks made out to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

Questions and/or clarification concerning this project shall be in writing and sent to the attention of the Executive Director through email at cpa.receptionist@pticom.com with copy to Joy Ann Tenorio at joy.tenorio@cnmiports.com no later than **October 25, 2021.**

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: **"RFP TECHNICAL SUBMISSION: CONFIDENTIAL; CONCESSION NO. SXC-2021-01."** One (1) original and three (3) copies of the technical proposal must be submitted no later than **2:00 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time, November 18, 2021**, to the Authority Administration Section, Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee. Proposers that submit proposals deemed to be Sufficiently Acceptable pursuant to the terms of this RFP will be invited to submit Price Bids and will be notified of the time, date, and location for submittal of such Price Bids.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so, would be in CPA's best interest. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

10/04/21
Date

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 234-5498 Ext. 6824 • Email: ppmo@marianas.edu

INVITATION FOR BIDS

NMC IFB 21-0005
INSTALLATION & RETROFIT OF COURTYARD
OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACE
BLDG O.

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the Installation and Retrofit of Courtyard outdoor learning space, Bldg. O, Saipan Campus.

The bid specifications and Scope of Work packet may be pick up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. P, commencing Friday, SEPTEMBER 17, 2021 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.** Electronic packet, please send a request to Anita Camacho @ ppmo@marianas.edu.

A Pre-bid meeting and Site visit is scheduled for 09:00am October 01, 2021, NMC Conference Room, attendance is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

Hard copies Bid submission
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P,
As Terlaje Campus Saipan
Due Date and Time: 10:00am, October 08, 2021, ChST

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through US Department of Education, Emergency Assistance to Institution of Higher Education Grant, award no. P938T190005. In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all bid offers for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

/s/Anita Camacho
Procurement Manager

$3M awarded to protect coral reefs, combat invasive species

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has announced $2,772,443 in Coral Reef and Natural Resources Initiative grant funds to protect coral reef resources in the U.S. territories and the freely associated states.

The funding includes $1,541,421 that will support efforts to control and eradicate invasive species in the insular areas.

"Supporting healthy coral reefs and protecting natural resources from invasive species are essential components to confront climate change effectively," said deputy assistant secretary Keone Nakoa. "Due to their island geographies and the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, families in the U.S. territories and the freely associated states are particularly vulnerable to the existential threat of climate change. I am pleased to announce these [fiscal year] 2021 funding awards, which help to address this priority for the Biden-Harris administration."

CRNRI awards totaling $1,231,022 for fiscal year 2021 have been awarded as follows:

- CNMI government's Coral Reef Initiative - **$113,290**
- Ridge to Reefs, non-governmental organization, for decreasing land-based sources of pollution impacting the coral reef in American Samoa - **$115,879**
- Nova Southeastern University Coral Reef Fellowship Program for the benefit of American Samoa, Guam, the CNMI, and the U.S. Virgin Islands - **$210,000**
- Coral Reef Research Foundation, a Palau-based non-governmental organization, for mapping Palau's lagoon and reefs - **$212,329**
- U.S. VI coral restoration from Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease - **$279,977**
- Guam Government's Coral Reef Initiative - $299,54

Grants totaling $1,541,421 for fiscal year 2021 to combat invasive species are awarded as follows:

- University of Guam for research and related efforts to counter the coconut rhinoceros beetle - **$866,423**
- Micronesia Conservation Trust, a regional non-governmental organization, for the eradication, control, and management of invasive species in Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap - **$300,000**
- Island Conservation, a non-profit organization, for the removal of invasive rats in Mili Atoll, Marshall Islands - **$299,838**
- CNMI government for Sabana Pandanus Forest control and native trees restoration project - **$75,160**

For more information about the Coral Reef and Natural Resources Program Initiative visit the OIA website at https://www.doi.gov/oia/financial-assistance. ***(PR)***

Biden signs insular FMAP extension

President Joe Biden has signed into law the continuing resolution that keeps the federal government funded through Dec. 3. Tucked into Section 3105 of the bill is an extension of the current, very favorable matching rates for insular area Medicaid—83% federal/17% local, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's digital newsletter, e-kilili, over the weekend.

"Without the extension the matching rates [the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages] would have reverted to 55% federal/45% local, increasing by millions of dollars the Commonwealth's cost of providing Medicaid services to 38,000 people in the Marianas," the newsletter states.

The FMAP extension follows last month's decision by the Biden administration to provide $64.01 million to the Marianas for Medicaid in fiscal year 2022, which began on Oct. 1, 2021.

"This is an increase of over $2 million from fiscal 2021. Our next goal will be to keep the FMAP extension in legislation we will pass before Dec. 3 to fund the federal government for all of fiscal 2022," the newsletter added. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

A. Samoa, Guam get $11M in CIP funds

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has awarded $10,280,000 in Capital Improvement Project grants to American Samoa for fiscal year 2021 and an additional $1,577,596 in fiscal year 2021 CIP grants for Guam.

CIP funds are used to address a variety of infrastructure needs in the U.S. territories, including critical infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, wastewater and solid waste systems, but can also be leveraged as local matching funds for other federal grant programs related to disaster recovery.

"This program provides critical support to the territorial governors who have prioritized their most critical public infrastructure needs," said Keone Nakoa, deputy assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs. "The Biden-Harris administration is pleased to support and strengthen opportunities for economic development, efforts to address climate change and investments in health care for families in the territories."

American Samoa CIP grants will be awarded as follows:

- Department of Public Works - Road repair and maintenance, drainage and retaining wall - **$1,400,000**
- Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center Labor and Delivery continuing renovations - **$1,200,000**
- American Samoa Shipyard Services Authority supplemental funding for the ongoing restoration to the 3000-ton slipway - **$1,200,000**
- American Samoa Telecommunications Authority fiber-optic cable repair and maintenance at Aunu'u and Manua - **$1,000,000**
- Department of Port Authority maintenance and repairs at airport lounge and overhang - **$1,000,000**
- Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center four ambulances - **$1,000,000**
- American Samoa Power Authority four rear-loading garbage trucks - $1,000,000
- Department of Public Works heavy equipment including specialized loaders, trucks, and excavators - $1,000,000
- Department of Public Safety four quick-attack fire trucks - $966,000
- American Samoa Government Operations and Maintenance set-aside funding for project maintenance - $514,000

Guam's CIP grants are awarded as follows:

- Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center Talafofo Cottage architectural and engineering fees - $678,000
- Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center New Beginnings Drug and Alcohol Facility renovation and construction - $899,596

The CNMI's CIP fiscal year 2021 grant funding totaling $9,082,000 was announced earlier for the CNMI government. Fiscal year 2021 funds will support deferred maintenance in schools, health care facility maintenance, and stormwater management.

Guam's CIP funds for fiscal year 2021 total $5,578,000, which includes an additional $4,000,000 that was announced earlier for the Guam government. The funds announced earlier will support deferred maintenance in schools and architectural and engineering design and site improvements for the proposed Guam Environmental Protection Agency building.

The U.S. Virgin Islands' CIP grant funding totaling $2,780,000 was announced earlier for the U.S. Virgin Islands government. Fiscal year 2021 funds will be used for road repair, maintenance of a wastewater treatment plant, and acquisition of four quick response vehicles.

For more information about CIP funding from the Office of Insular Affairs see the budget on the OIA website at https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/fy2022-oia-budget-justification.pdf. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

The great mandates: COVID vaccine requirements are succeeding in protecting thousands upon thousands of additional Americans

For all the manufactured controversy around COVID vaccine mandates, one thing no one can deny is that they're fulfilling their intended purpose. From health care workers in California to employees of the food production behemoth Tyson, tying vaccination to continued employment is pushing people around the country to get the jab and help at long last restrict the virus' ability to kill and propagate itself.

After numerous dashed hopes that we were seeing the end of this ordeal, infection rates are flagging around the country, opening up the possibility that —fingers crossed ever so tightly—delta might be the last variant to rampage across the United States. Whether or not workers are getting inoculated grudgingly is beside the point. The antibodies their bodies will produce don't care if their hosts were vaccinated with a smile or a grimace.

As the sticks and carrots pile up and more people take this simple and lifesaving step, stubborn anti-vaxxers who have continued spreading misinformation and pressing lawsuits against state, federal and employer-instituted mandates should realize that they have lost. If they have any remaining shame, they will step aside and drop their efforts to keep muddying the waters and prolonging the pandemic. It is individuals' right to refuse to get their shots, but it is society's right and responsibility to protect itself.

The next frontier for mandates must be public school students themselves. The vaccine has not yet received full approval for most young people, but the FDA OK is sure to come soon. The second it does, COVID-19 inoculation should join the litany of immunization required for school entrance and attendance. New York already lists nine different shots.

Skeptics and anti-vaxxers have spent a lot of time and energy trying to convince the public that COVID was equivalent to the seasonal flu. Early on, given the virulence of this novel virus, that was a preposterous notion. Now, ironically, the analogy makes some sense: It's here, and it's morphing. Get your shot, and regular boosters, to ward it off.

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Pandora Papers show the rich will always find a way

By DAVID FICKLING
Bloomberg Opinion

David Fickling is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering commodities, as well as industrial and consumer companies. He has been a reporter for* Bloomberg News, Dow Jones, *the* Wall Street Journal, *the* Financial Times, *and the* Guardian.

If you want to know why nearly 40 million leaked documents on the salting away of assets in offshore financial centers have failed to result in comprehensive change since the revelations started eight years ago, Billie Holiday provides a clue: "Them that's got shall get; them that's not shall lose. So the Bible said, and it still is news."

The latest set of leaks to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists is the largest yet. After sifting the data, media organizations have named King Abdullah II of Jordan, associates of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis, and Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta in connection with assets stashed offshore. For all the remarkable revelations about the shadow global financial system for wealthy individuals and businesses since the ICIJ's first revelations in 2013, though, it's striking how little has changed.

Measures to wind back this system seem ineffectual at best. Eight years have passed since governments promised coordinated action to crack down on the use of offshore structures to minimize corporate taxes and starve states of revenue, but if anything the movement has been in the opposite direction.

So much money now moves through the world's offshore financial centers that such paper transactions now account for a greater flow of capital than any country receives from genuine foreign investments. The royalties and licensing fees that underpin these structures are growing faster than trade in physical goods and conventional services.

Far from taking a larger share, most developed nations have coped with the leakage of taxable profits over the past decade by cutting their own corporate tax rates—a tacit admission that enforcement has failed. Mandatory disclosure rules introduced in 2014 to prevent European banks' use of tax havens seem to have made no real difference, according to a report last month by the EU Tax Observatory.

Why have all these worthy efforts achieved so little?

One explanation suggested by the list of powerful figures named in the latest leaks, dubbed the Pandora Papers, is simply that the people in charge of writing the laws and treaties that underpin international capital flows have much to gain from the current set-up. For as long as an unreasonable amount of wealth and power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals and businesses, they'll seek ways to move assets to whichever places promise to treat them most leniently. Consultants will aim to profit from assisting this trade and, in the process, become experts at finding loopholes, further accelerating the concentration of wealth and the erosion of tax bases.

In the U.S. there's a revolving door between senior roles in major legal and accounting firms and government jobs, as the *New York Times* reported last month, with a similar situation around secondments in the U.K. As a result, firms with an interest in minimizing their clients' tax bills often have a role in developing the policies that will decide how much the same clients will have to pay.

There's a deeper issue, however. Those tax laws and treaties are, by their nature, long and complex. When divided up between the world's 320 national and sub-national jurisdictions crossing as many as five different countries, as with the famed "double Irish Dutch sandwich" tax avoidance structure, the possibilities for loopholes are almost limitless.

Any attempts to restrain them are like a game of Whac-A-Mole. That applies even to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's attempts to reset the world's tax rules via an accord between 130 jurisdictions due to be finalized this month. The centerpiece of the proposal, a 15% global minimum tax rate that can be applied unilaterally by governments that feel they're losing out, is over time as likely to end up as a global maximum tax. The Biden administration's attempts to restore rates cut to 21% under Donald Trump will stop at 26%, rather than the 28% originally sought or the 35% that existed previously. There's little sign the race to the bottom that's been going on for four decades is about to end.

Ultimately, the problem lies with the unrestrained capital flows that have moved around the globe since the decline of the Bretton Woods system in the 1970s. While capital can move across borders without restraint, a small portion of that money will always be available to those who want to keep their wealth out of the hands of legal or tax authorities.

The world's financial architecture is only tentatively starting to contemplate whether the opening of capital accounts—and the loss of monetary independence or exchange-rate stability that inevitably results—has been a good deal, or a devil's bargain. If governments want to address the cause of tax avoidance rather than apply endless Band-Aids to the symptoms, that decision must ultimately be revisited.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Scientists and experts get plenty wrong. But we should still trust them

By NICHOLAS GOLDBERG
Los Angeles Times

Nicholas Goldberg is an associate editor and Op-Ed columnist for the Los Angeles Times.

I follow the science and trust the experts, but let's be honest: They don't always get it right.

For instance, we recently learned that although public health experts had told us repeatedly that the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines were equally effective, that's not actually true. Half a dozen studies, the New York Times reported, now show that Moderna offers more protection.

And that's just the most recent screw-up. Don't wear masks, they told us in the beginning, until they changed their minds. COVID-19 is unlikely to be spread by asymptomatic people—oh, oops, yes it is. Wipe down your packages—um, no, actually that's not necessary.

A few days ago, irked by the most recent turnaround, I suddenly recalled a book I've had on my shelf for the last 37 years. Titled "The Experts Speak," it is a nearly 400-page doorstopper written in 1984 by Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky that claims to be the "definitive compendium of authoritative misinformation."

Navasky and Cerf set out to lampoon the world's experts by showing how wrong they've been over the last 2,000 years about everything, including, they noted, facts, theories, dates, geography, predictions about the future, conclusions about the past and, yes, even assertions about the present.

"We are ready to concede that the experts are occasionally right," they wrote. "As a matter of fact, some of our colleagues have argued persuasively that the experts are right as much as half the time."

OK, they were being snarky, but their compendium is no joke. Here are a handful of the thousands of entries:

"Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau," Yale economics professor Irving Fisher said on Oct. 17, 1929, just a week before the market crash that devastated the U.S. economy.

"Roosevelt will be a one-term president," wrote political columnist Mark Sullivan in the New York Herald in 1935. Roosevelt was elected to four terms and died in office in 1945.

"[Copulation] is … dangerous immediately after a meal," wrote Dr. Bernard S. Talmey in his treatise on the "science of sex-attraction" in 1919.

"A man-made moon voyage will never occur regardless of all future scientific advances," said Lee DeForest, an American inventor who has often been called the "father of the radio," in 1957.

"Clearing and colder, preceded by light snow," was the official New York City weather forecast for March 12, 1888, the day of the blizzard of '88, which killed more than 400 people.

"For the majority of people, smoking has a beneficial effect," Los Angeles surgeon Ian G. Macdonald told Newsweek in 1963.

I think I needn't go further. Their message is clear. Don't believe everything you hear, even from someone with an advanced degree. Especially when it predicts the future. Furthermore, even when the experts all agree—they might still be wrong.

But having said all that, what's the alternative?

With all due respect to Navasky and Cerf, no number of wrong assertions by a scientist or expert truly undermines the value of study, knowledge, experience, experimentation, data-gathering and the scientific method. (Nor do I think the authors meant to suggest it did.) And just because the experts make mistakes, that doesn't mean that they aren't right vastly more often than they're wrong, or that they don't know a lot more about viruses than you and I do.

What we sometimes forget is that science and expertise don't exist in a world of perfectly discernible truth and objectivity, but in one of uncertainty. Especially when it comes to advising on policy, scientists' conclusions and experts' recommendations are based, as often as not, on estimates and hypotheses, on projections and modeling. It is necessary to weigh evidence, reconcile contradictory findings and make judgments, sometimes with incomplete information.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists and policymakers have obviously been under pressure to move quickly. At the beginning, little was known about the virus, but policy recommendations were urgently necessary. Studies were sped up and assumptions were made, some of which didn't bear out. (There are currently more than 360,000 entries in the World Health Organization's database of global literature on the coronavirus.)

Unfortunately, mistakes, when they occur, give ammunition to skeptics. Mistakes encourage laypeople to trust their own anecdotal observations—or the baseless assertions of irresponsible people around them—rather than authoritative sources.

What's more, Americans—or at least a subset of them—have a long tradition of distrusting authority and people they see as pointy-headed know-it-alls. Historian Richard Hofstadter wrote a whole book in 1963 about "anti-intellectualism" in the United States, arguing that many Americans believe their own common sense "is an altogether adequate substitute for, if not actually much superior to, formal knowledge and expertise."

The Donald Trumps of the world take advantage of that. "The experts are terrible," said the demagogue-in-chief in 2016. Later he made empty promises like this one about COVID in March 2020: "It's going to go away, hopefully at the end of the month."

Sure, I now wish I'd gotten the Moderna vaccine rather than the Pfizer, but data evolve (and Pfizer is effective). It's easy to be irked by botched predictions and inaccurate assertions. But to discount rigorous methods, objective standards and open-minded inquiry—to discount science and expertise—is Dark Ages thinking. It's a much bigger mistake than doing a 360 on mask-wearing or which vaccine works best.

Bring back spirit of community that has seen us through other crises

By BENSON HSU
American Academy of Pediatrics

Dr. Benson Hsu is a pediatric critical care physician in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and the chair-elect to the Section on Critical Care at the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In September 2020, a farmer in Divide County, North Dakota, suffered a heart attack during harvesting. While he was in critical condition in a local hospital, nearly 60 of his neighboring farmers came to his aid—halting their own harvest so that his crops could be gathered in time.

This is the Dakotas that I know.

I am a transplant here in South Dakota. Over 10 years ago, I arrived as a new physician who had graduated from an Ivy League school and had lived for several years in New York City. Truth be told, I came with preconceived notions of this community.

I could not have been more wrong. What I found here was a community more caring, more willing to sacrifice, and more willing to take on hardship for each other than I have witnessed anywhere else.

The story of this farmer is not unique.

During my time in South Dakota, I have lost track of the acts of selflessness I've witnessed in our intensive care unit, of the innumerable times that a community rallied around a sick child. This spirit of community and shared sense of duty are felt in many areas of the country, from small towns to large cities. We come together in a crisis and look out for our neighbors.

But over these past several months during the COVID-19 pandemic—the most significant professional challenge I've faced as a pediatric critical care provider—I've lost sight of the Dakotas I've come to know and love.

You see, the Dakotas I knew would do anything for their neighbor. The Dakotas I knew would bear any burden if it helped their community. The Dakotas I knew would sacrifice anything to protect their kids.

Recently, I admitted a child from North Dakota with COVID-19. Unfortunately, because of the surge in critically ill pediatric patients, all pediatric critical care beds in North Dakota were full and he was transferred to South Dakota, hours away from home.

He was not old enough to be vaccinated and he contracted COVID from his community. He ultimately survived and returned home, but he required treatment and aggressive respiratory support in the intensive care unit.

Across the U.S., my colleagues in pediatric intensive care units face a remarkably unique illness. We know how to limit its spread and we have a way out—through a deeply tested and proven vaccine. Yet this is an illness that has overrun numerous pediatric intensive care units in the South and Midwest.

The Dakotas I knew and love would do anything to prevent this from happening.

But the Dakotas I see now are fighting over the science of masking while accepting that all surgeons wear masks to prevent infections in the operating room. The Dakotas I see now are arguing against COVID-19 vaccine mandates even when, in our own states, many other vaccinations are required for school entry. The Dakotas I see now are challenging the scientific knowledge and integrity of providers yet expecting the same overwhelmed providers to provide them the best possible care based on science when they become ill.

This is not the Dakotas I knew.

Divide County, North Dakota, the county where so many farmers came out selflessly to help their neighbor, currently has a vaccination rate of only 42%. COVID cases in the county, similar to other parts of the country, have skyrocketed in recent weeks to levels not seen since December 2020.

I have a simple request: Please bring back the Dakotas I knew. We can do this by:

- Caring for the kids in our communities who are too young to be vaccinated or are immunocompromised by masking and limiting the spread of COVID.
- Supporting masking in schools so that kids can continue their education in person without fear of being taken out of schools for quarantines or illness.
- Getting vaccinated so that a COVID hospitalization doesn't overwhelm the local hospital to the point that kids must be transported to another state for care.

The Dakotas I knew and love would do anything to prevent suffering in their community.

I long to see those Dakotas again.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'We are grateful for the TRIP Program'

The Korean Tour Guide Association would like to thank the collective efforts of the Marianas Visitors Authority, COVID-19 Task Force, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Governor's Council of Economic Advisers, all front-liners, and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres for the creation and launching of the Korea TRIP Program. Admittedly, we did not expect to see the huge market demand that we are experiencing right now and we are very happy to see these results of strong tourist demand for the CNMI. We understand that the initial program has had to be modified due to the COVID-19 delta variant and agree that the safety of our community is our first priority in the reopening of our tourism economy.

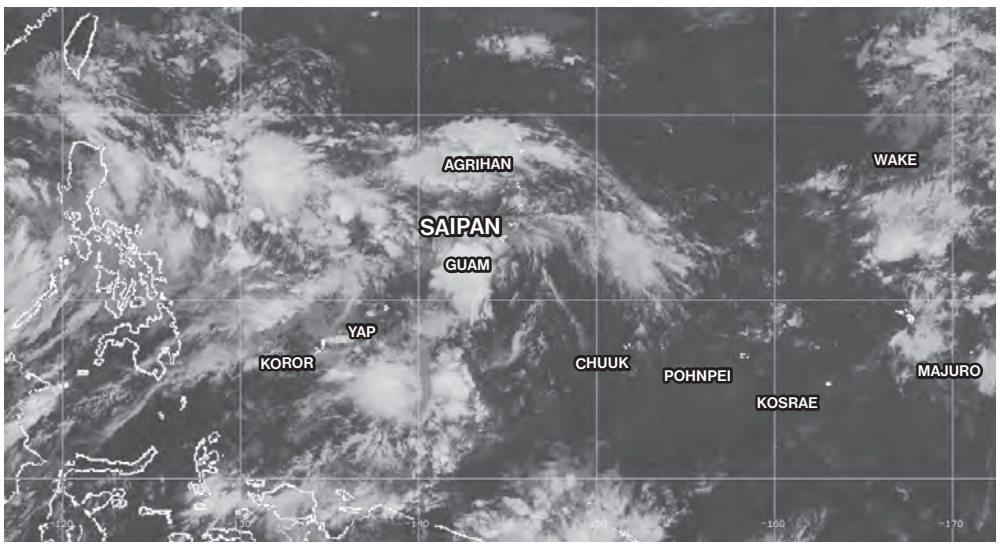
We welcome the addition of more hybrid quarantine hotels in order to meet the strong demand of Korean tourists that wish to visit the Marianas and we stand behind these efforts as this will lead to potentially additional flights and increasing the number of tourists we can serve. The Korean Tour Guide Association is a membership of tour guides from multiple Korean tour companies and the TRIP Program has allowed us to reopen our businesses and get people back to work. As the saying goes, "Tourism is everyone's business," and we are grateful for the TRIP Program and for the collective efforts of all individuals, parties, and agencies involved in making tourism in the CNMI happen again.

Yong Mook Choi
Chairman, Korean Tour Guide Association

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. southeast winds 10 to 15 mph. Highs around 85. Chance of showers 50 percent.	Cloudy with numerous heavy showers and isolated thunderstorms. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph. Locally heavy rainfall possible. Lows around 76. Highs around 84. Chance of precipitation 70 percent.	Cloudy with numerous heavy showers and isolated thunderstorms. Lows in the mid 70s. Highs in the mid 80s. Chance of showers 70 percent.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the mid 80s. Lows in the upper 70s. Chance of showers 50 percent.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 80s. Lows in the upper 70s. Chance of showers 40 percent.
85º / 75º	84º / 76º	80º / 70º	80º / 70º	80º / 70º



PICTURE TIME: 7:49 AM, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Overcast skies, scattered showers and are in store for the Marianas today with moderate southeast winds and significant wave heights of 5 to 7 feet. Expect locally heavy rains associated with the monsoon.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Mostly cloudy	86 / 77 °F
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	81 / 77 °F
Yap	Cloudy	88 / 77 °F
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	87 / 78 °F
Pohnpei	Cloudy	90 / 77 °F
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	86 / 79 °F
Majuro	Cloudy	84 / 80 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:07 AM	6:02 PM
Friday	6:07 AM	6:01 PM
Saturday	6:07 AM	6:00 PM
Sunday	6:07 AM	6:00 PM
Monday	6:07 AM	6:00 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:35	6:46PM	-
Friday	7:34	7:31 PM	-
Saturday	8:35	8:20 PM	-
Sunday	9:39	9:14 PM	-
Monday	10:43	10:11 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Fair	64 / 58 °F
Beijing	Light Rain	56 /45 °F
Hong Kong	Fair	90 / 82 °F
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	80 / 75 °F
London	Clear	62 / 47 °F
Los Angeles	Clear	66 / 62 °F
Manila	Light Rain	84 / 77 °F
Melbourne	Sunny	72 / 47 °F
Miami	Fair	81 / 79 °F
New York	Cloudy	64 / 63 °F
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	83 / 66 °F
Paris	Fair	62 / 45 °F
Busan	Partly Cloudy	80 / 69 °F
Rome	Partly Cloudy	71 / 55 °F
Salem	Cloudy	69 / 67 °F
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	57 / 56 °F
Seoul	Cloudy	73 / 64 °F
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	83 / 66 °F
Washington, DC	Cloudy	71 / 67 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:57 AM	Low Tide	0.31
7:56 AM	High Tide	2.00
2:12 PM	Low Tide	0.41
8:03 PM	High Tide	2.01

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 5, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:45am	7:25am	1, 3, 6
UA117	9:45am	10:25am	2, 4, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	7:05pm	8:50pm	2, 5
UA183	7:25pm	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:45am	9:10pm	1, 3, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	8:50pm	2, 5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	9:10pm	4, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:00am	5:41am	1, 3, 6
UA174	8:00am	8:41am	2, 4, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	9:50pm	3:55am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:25pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	9:50pm	5:41am+1	2, 5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	5:41am+1	7 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	8:41am+1	1, 3, 4, 6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Torres backs scholarships for behavioral health students

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has expressed support for a Senate bill that would create a scholarship program for students pursuing college in the field of behavioral health.

In a letter to Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider and House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez dated Oct. 4, 2021, Torres said that Senate Bill 22-05 will not only provide assistance to CNMI residents who are looking to further their education in the field of behavioral health, but also ensure that the CNMI will attain much-needed behavioral professionals to help the CNMI community.

"Through this scholarship, it is my hope that we become a healthier CNMI through the acquired knowledge and skills that CNMI residents availing of this program will use to help in the prevention and reduction of behavioral health related to substance abuse, suicide, and criminal activities," he said.

He cited the worsening rate of behavioral health issues throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, causing a mental illness and substance addiction crisis that must be addressed by psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, counselors, social workers, and substance abuse professionals who are qualified to do so.

"The strategic conditions of this scholarship award, as reviewed and monitored by the CNMI Scholarship Office, will also provide a means of accountability and assurance that the recipient of the scholarship award will return to the CNMI after graduation to join the CNMI workforce. Through these conditions, CNMI residents will be encouraged to apply and avail of this scholarship opportunity to utilize their acquired knowledge in their respective field of behavioral health study for the betterment of the Commonwealth," he added.

The scholarship program will be called the Behavioral Health Professional Scholarship. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Al-Anon/Nar-Anon Family Group 12-Step Support Group

Friends and family members of alcoholics and addicts will be meeting Saturday, Oct. 9, from 10:15am to 11:15am at Paradise Dental Spa, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, across the street from Chong's Refrigeration.

Al-Anon/Nar-Anon is a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking or drug use. By sharing common experiences and applying the 12-Step principles of AA, families and friends of alcoholics and addicts can bring positive changes to their individual situations, whether or not the alcoholic or addict admits the existence of a drinking or drug problem or seeks help.

For more information, call or text Donna at 783-1900, and follow us on Facebook: Al-Anon Family Group CNMI. You may also wish to visit www.al-anon.org & www.nar-anon.org. ***(PR)***

Free webinar on how to get HUBZone certified

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering a free webinar today, Oct. 7, on how to get HUBZone certified. All of Guam and the CNMI are HUBZones. The Guam PTAC will take you through the certification process, the required supporting documents, and follow-up requirements from SBA. The webinar will run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar. To register, visit http://www.guamptac.com/news-and-events.php. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com •
Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2021

Opening date: September 20, 2021 Closing date: October 08, 2021

Positions: (1) Receptionist/Secretary (Saipan)
(1) Custodial/Maintenance-I (CPA Rota)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, October 08, 2021.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-21-036

Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from firms for Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $25.00 for one package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-036, Office Space Rental for CUC's Administrative Functions and Operations"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. on October 15, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 23, 2021** to Manny Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address, manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to John C. Mafnas, Contracts Officer at john.mafnas@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CUC-RFP-21-032

SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND DATA ACQUISITION (SCADA) FOR POWER PLANT NO.1, LOWER BASE, SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for a turn-key design and implementation (Design, Supply and Installation) of SCADA system at its Primary Power Plant (Power Plant No.1), Lower Base, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-032, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. on October 13, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 22, 2021** to manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Representatives of the Japanese Society of the Northern Marianas, Saipan Keepers CNMI, and Marianas Visitors Authority conduct a beach cleanup beginning at Kilili Beach Park in Saipan on Sept. 27, 2021, in celebration of World Tourism Day. Other volunteers begin at the Japanese tank in Chalan Laulau, Saipan.

Katsuko Takahashi participates in a beach cleanup on Saipan on Sept. 27, 2021, in celebration of World Tourism Day.

Hitoshi Yamaguchi, left, and Seiji Sato participate in a beach cleanup on Saipan on Sept. 27, 2021, in celebration of World Tourism Day.

In celebration of World Tourism Day, free tours were held at the NMI Museum of History & Culture for students of high school Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically clubs on Sept. 27, 2021.

Representatives of the Japanese Society of the Northern Marianas, Saipan Keepers CNMI, and Marianas Visitors Authority, and Miss Marianas Savannah Delos Santos conduct a beach cleanup beginning at Kilili Beach Park on Saipan on Sept. 27, 2021, in celebration of World Tourism Day.

Troy Laniyo, left, demonstrates coconut frond weaving to students of Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically clubs of Kagman High School, Saipan Southern High School, and Marianas High School in Garapan, Saipan on Sept. 27, 2021, in celebration of World Tourism Day.

Sixty-five participants join the World Tourism Day Sunset Run Fun in Saipan on Sept. 27, 2021. Runs were also held on Tinian and Rota.

Mike Naputi, right, teaches coconut oil making to students of Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically clubs of Kagman High School and Saipan Southern High School in Garapan, Saipan on Sept. 27, 2021, in celebration of World Tourism Day.

Participants gather for the World Tourism Day Sunset Run Fun on Rota on Sept. 27, 2021.

MVA PHOTOS

Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla Maratita Iakopo awards winners of the World Tourism Day Sunset Fun Run in Susupe, Saipan on Sept. 27, 2021. From left, Shuji Kuroda, Dev Bachani, Tomas Abel, Brad Ruszala, Iakopo, Akiko Miller, Tiana Cabrera, and Lydia Tan.

World Tourism Day celebrated in the Marianas

A beach cleanup and culture presentations kicked off and a sunset fun run closed out the celebration of World Tourism Day in the Marianas on Sept. 27, 2021.

The Japanese Society of the Northern Marianas, Saipan Keepers CNMI, Miss Marianas Savannah Delos Santos, and the Marianas Visitors Authority rallied at 8:30am to clean the beach from Kilili Beach Park to Quartermaster Road. Approximately 500 lbs of trash were collected.

Free tours were held at the NMI Museum of History & Culture beginning at 9am with students of high school Marianas Youth Welcome All Visitors Enthusiastically clubs. Saipan Southern High, Marianas High, and Kagman High participated in the tours, which included cultural presentations and demonstrations of coconut oil making, coconut candy making, coconut frond weaving, and mwar (floral head lei) making by artists with the Commonwealth Council of Arts & Culture. Free museum tours were also offered to tourism partners and the public later in the day.

"The MVA is pleased to coordinate this year's activities in celebration of World Tourism Day as a reminder of the importance of tourism for our Marianas economy and that tourism is still everybody's business," said MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "As one Marianas, we should continue to protect our environment and take pride in our culture, our pristine islands, and our warm hospitality. We extend a warm si yu'us ma'ase, olomwaay, and thank you for everyone who joined this year's celebration."

World Tourism Day 5K Sunset Fun Runs were held on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan in the early evening. In Saipan's run beginning at Kilili Beach Park in Susupe, 65 individuals participated, with place prizes awarded for the 5K trot. In the Men's Division, first to cross the finish line were Dev Bachani (16:49), Tomas Abel (16:55), and Shuji Kuroda (17:21). In the Women's Division, top finishers were Akiko Miller (19:00), Tiana Cabrera (20:13), and Lydia Tan (22:22). Brad Ruszala won first place for best Chamorro or Carolinian attire. Rota's run commenced at East Harbor, and Tinian's run began at Taga Beach. ***(MVA)***

Business

Maranatha Christian Store is now open

BEA CABRERA
Maranatha Christian Store is located in Dan Dan beside Micafé's Snack Corner.

BEA CABRERA
Maranatha Christian Store offers affordable everyday items.

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Opening the Maranatha Christian Store in Dan Dan on Aug. 2 is a dream come true for store steward Claire Javillonar. There was once a Christian store on island, she said, but it closed down many years ago and this motivated them work hard to open up one that would cater to everyone.

"MCS is under the wings of the Pentecostal Missionary Church of Christ but it is a shop that welcomes everyone in the community, whether you belong to a particular religious sect or not. We know that the community has been longing for a Christian store and now that we are open, it [feels] like a burden in our hearts has been lifted," she said. "Many customers come to the store and are thankful that we have items that no other store on island carries. … Our prices are reasonable too. …We made everything affordable…because we understand the situation of our economy."

BEA CABRERA
Maranatha Christian Store carries ready-to-wear items, household stuff, and self-care items.

MCS has a variety of items that people can choose from, like Christian books, Bibles, communion wafers, gift items such as greeting cards, mugs, T-shirts, stickers, and portraits with inspirational Biblical verses. They also have household items, clothes, shoes, slippers and an "everything for $1" corner that includes self-care products.

Javillonar said that part of the income from the store benefits church activities such as outreach programs. "…we use the funds to continue our commitment to engage in community service and outreach programs. Pre-pandemic, we had medical missions. …During typhoon aftermaths, we give away bags of groceries to affected communities. Currently, we give away bags of toiletries whenever we can."

Opening the store feels like "we have accomplished one of our immediate goals," which was to put up a Christian store," Javillonar said. "So far we are happy with the outcome. …In terms of how the store is doing, people are coming and buying what they need. Some come in not to buy for themselves but for others as giveaways," she added.

BEA CABRERA
Maranatha Christian Store stewards Claire Javillonar and her son, Clarence.

An upcoming community project is the Gospel Concert on Oct. 24 at 6pm. "This will be held at the San Antonio basketball court and we invite everyone to come. This is an opportunity for us to share food and bags of toiletries for community members that will watch," Javillonar said.

Maranatha Christian Store is open Monday to Friday from 1pm to 6pm and Saturday from 9am to 6pm. For more information, call (670) 785-6341 or (670) 789-7566. They are also on Facebook: Maranatha Christian Store.

And for those who may be wondering where the store gets its name, Javillonar said "maranatha" comes from Greek. Originally an Aramaic term, it is interpreted to mean, "Come, our Lord."

Outage highlights how vital Facebook has become worldwide

NEW YORK (AP)—The six-hour outage at Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp was a headache for many casual users but far more serious for the millions of people worldwide who rely on the social media sites to run their businesses or communicate with relatives, fellow parents, teachers or neighbors.

When all three services went dark Monday, it was a stark reminder of the power and reach of Facebook, which owns the photo-sharing and messaging apps.

Around the world, the breakdown at WhatsApp left many at a loss. In Brazil, the messaging service is by far the most widely used app in the country, installed on 99% of smartphones, according to tech pollster Mobile Time.

WhatsApp has become essential in Brazil to communicate with friends and family, as well as for a variety of other tasks, such as ordering food. Offices, various services and even the courts had trouble making appointments, and phone lines became overwhelmed.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians in their homeland and abroad fretted over the WhatsApp outage.

Many of the country's more than 11 million people depend it to alert one another about gang violence in particular neighborhoods or to talk to relatives in the U.S. about money transfers and other important matters. Haitian migrants traveling to the U.S. rely on it to find each other or share key information such as safe places to sleep.

Nelzy Mireille, a 35-year-old unemployed woman who depends on money sent from relatives abroad, said she stopped at a repair shop in the capital of Port-au-Prince because she thought her phone was malfunctioning.

"I was waiting on confirmation on a money transfer from my cousin," she said. "I was so frustrated."

"I was not able to hear from my love," complained 28-year-old Wilkens Bourgogne, referring to his partner, who was in the neighboring Dominican Republic, buying goods to bring back to Haiti. He said he was concerned about her safety because of the violence in their homeland.

"Insecurity makes everyone worry," he said.

In rebel-held Syria, where the telecommunication infrastructure has been disrupted by war, residents and emergency workers rely mostly on internet communication.

Naser AlMuhawish, a Turkey-based Syrian doctor who monitors coronavirus cases in rebel-held territory in Syria, said WhatsApp is the main communication method used with over 500 workers in the field.

They switched to Skype, but WhatsApp works better when internet service is shaky, he said. If there had been an emergency such as shelling that he needed to warn field workers about, there could have been major problems, he said.

"Luckily this didn't happen yesterday during the outage," he said.

Evidence suggests ship anchor snagged, dragged oil pipeline

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP)—Evidence emerged Tuesday that a ship's anchor snagged and dragged an underwater pipeline that ruptured and spilled tens of thousands of gallons of crude oil off Southern California, an accident the Coast Guard acknowledged it did not investigate for nearly 10 hours after the first call came in about a possible leak.

The pipe was split open and a nearly mile-long section apparently pulled along the ocean floor, possibly by "an anchor that hooked the pipeline, causing a partial tear," federal transportation investigators said.

"The pipeline has essentially been pulled like a bow string," said Martyn Willsher, CEO of Amplify Energy Corp., which operates the pipeline. "At its widest point, it is 105 feet (32 meters) away from where it was."

Huge cargo ships regularly cross above the pipeline as they head into the massive Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex. They are given coordinates where they are to anchor until unloading.

Even when anchored, cargo ships continually move from shifting winds and tides. If a ship fails to properly set its anchor in the ocean floor, those forces of nature come into play and can push the ship and drag the anchor along the bottom, potentially catching anything in its way, said Steven Browne, a professor of marine transportation at California State University Maritime Academy.

Anchors on large ships can weigh 10 tons or more and are attached to hundreds of feet of thick steel chains. "Whatever the anchor gets fouled on will come along with the ship," Browne said.

The spill sent up to 126,000 gallons (572,807 liters) of heavy crude into the ocean off Huntington Beach. It then washed onto miles of beaches and a protected marshland.

The beaches could remain closed for weeks or longer, a major hit to the local economy. Coastal fisheries in the area are closed to commercial and recreational fishing. On shore, animals rescuers have been pleasantly surprised to find few birds covered in oil.

The time of the spill was still unclear Tuesday, and there was no indication whether investigators suspect that a particular ship was involved.

Democratic Congresswoman Katie Porter, a Democrat who chairs the oversight and investigations subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee, said the panel would investigate the incident.

"We are going to make sure that we have answers as to how this happened, and to make sure that we hold the responsible party accountable," said Porter, who represents a district a few miles inland from the spill area.

Coast Guard officials defended their decision to wait until sunrise Saturday to investigate a possible spill first reported by a commercial ship at 8:22 p.m. Friday near a cluster of boats that were anchored off Huntington Beach.

That sighting was supported by a report to the National Response Center, a hazardous spill hotline staffed by the Coast Guard, at 2:06 a.m. Saturday from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which said satellite images showed the strong likelihood of an oil slick.

Environment

Bacock, Alan
Gogal, Danny
Dunning, C...
Vaouli, Elena
EV
+47
RECOMMENDATIONS
BECQ formulated a substantive response due to its responsibility to uphold federal and local laws. Subject matter experts housed within the agency.
In order to engage the general public, it is recommended to conduct the following activities:
• Community outreach.
• Develop transparent and frequent means of information sharing.

Division of Coastal Resources Management acting director Rich Salas presents recommendations for a meaningful engagement with the community for federal agencies during the webinar on environmental justice considerations in National Environmental Policy Act reviews held last Sept. 23, for Pacific Islanders. The webinar also had officials from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency discussing NEPA and environmental justice, and CNMI House Committee on Natural Resources chair Rep. Sheila Babauta for the CNMI perspective. Photo is a screenshot of the webinar. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'Consultation does not equal consent'

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

The CNMI laid its stance on meaningful engagement in the Pacific before officials of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during a webinar on environmental justice considerations in National Environmental Policy Act reviews last Friday, Sept. 23, for Pacific Islanders.

House Committee on Natural Resources chair Rep. Sheila Babauta talked about environmental justice in the Marianas while Division of Coastal Resources Management acting director Rich Salas discussed the island's experience on and recommendations to the NEPA process.

NEPA, signed into law back in 1970, is the "national charter for environmental responsibility," crafted to ensure that federal agencies consider the significant environmental impact of their proposed actions, and that they inform the public about their decision making process. These actions include 1) actions by federal agencies (i.e., military training, federal facilities, forestry, National Parks), 2) federal permits (gas pipelines, offshore oil and gas), and 3) federal grants (water treatment, infrastructure).

While actions are explicitly identified on the NEPA, the impacts are a different story.

"We, as EPA, don't tell the agency what a significant impact is," USEPA Region 9's Connell Dunning said. "The lead agency makes that decision, and then explains the rationale for those decisions [and] for what's the significant effect. It's important to consider. It's the context or the setting of an effect that can have an impact on whether or not something is significant."

The second part of understanding significance and how lead agencies think about it, Dunning added, is the degree or intensity of the effect, and considerations for what are the long- or short-term impacts, as well as impacts on public health and safety.

NEPA ties in with environmental justice as it allows for an avenue—a solid process for the public to review and assess actions that are being proposed by federal agencies and could affect the public and their environment.

Environmental justice

In 1994, then-President Bill Clinton issued Executive Order 12898, setting the stage for environmental justice in the country. It directed federal agencies to identify and address "the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects" of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.

It also directed the agencies to develop strategies toward environmental justice, as well as provide minority and low-income communities access to public information and public participation.

"Each person should enjoy a healthful environment. However, not everyone has been given that same opportunity," USEPA Region 9's Environmental Justice coordinator Alan Bacock said at the webinar. "In general, people who live, work, play, and pray in the most polluted environments are commonly people of color, indigenous, and/or low income. These communities suffer from disproportionate impacts of environmental burdens."

Environmental justice, Bacock added, is about "moving to where we want to go"—and that is bound by two key principles—fair treatment and meaningful involvement.

The EPA official also said that earlier this year, President Joe Biden issued Executive Order 14008, one task of which is increases the government's ability to address current and historic environmental injustices.

NEPA from the NMI's perspective

In the CNMI, when it comes to NEPA, most of the documents that warrant a review are proposed military activities of the U.S. Department of Defense, typically associated with the proposed relocation of the military forces to the Marianas region, according to DCRM acting director Rich Salas.

CRM assesses NEPA documents as it relates to the enforceable policies of the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality.

"Pursuant to the requirements of Section 307 of the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act, federal actions which have reasonably foreseeable effects on uses on resources within the coastal zone should be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the enforceable policies of the Coastal Resource Management Program," he said.

Salas, in particular, talked about the Mariana Islands Training and Testing, particularly the review of the supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. "It's an extension of the military's training range. They'd like to propose activities associated with terrestrial activities and marine activities. We saw that when we reviewed the documents, the activities that were proposed on land were minimal in terms of foreseeable coastal effects, but when it came to the activities that occurred at sea, we've determined that there were reasonably foreseeable effects."

According to Salas, numerous consultations were held between both the CNMI government and the federal agency, which agreed to not include amphibious landings on the island of Tinian, where sea turtles nest.

From the initial release of the draft EIS in 2011 leading up to the final supplemental EIS in 2019, Salas said that the CNMI government strived to provide meaningful comments and collaborate closely with the Department of Defense.

"It took a lot of time and effort in our teams to build up to where we were, to reach a point to where we were able to express our concerns from the CNMI's end and have the DOD consider the actions," Salas said. "We always appreciate the opportunity to work with our federal counterparts, but despite that, at the end of the day, there were still a lot of unaddressed concerns. There are still many questions and data gaps that we had requested for them to provide to the CNMI."

"We worked on that through this process, and it was great that the NEPA was able to support that process because we stuck to that. The procedural concerns was a big part of the response of the CNMI resource agencies," he added.

In his presentation, Salas also threw in some recommendations for the federal agencies, particularly to develop more transparent and frequent means of information, and a knowledge exchange process, to meaningfully engage with the community.

"We do the best we can with the resources that we have out here, but at the same time, we are still left in the dark at times," he said.

Meaningfully engage with the CNMI

"It is very important to engage with our people, share knowledge, and encourage youth participation, when plans are being proposed, " said Babauta, who highlighted the intimate connection of the people of the Marianas to the environment, which she said is so profound that language was actually included in the CNMI Covenant agreement to ensure this connection was clear during negotiations with the United States.

Section 806 of the Covenant, which established the CNMI's political union with the U.S., states that "the United States will continue to recognize and respect the scarcity and special importance of land in the Northern Mariana Islands."

The legislator also referenced the very first public meeting she attended that was held by a federal agency, where she was "completely shocked" by the agency's limited knowledge about the community, as she provided recommendations on how federal agencies can establish a more meaningful engagement.

"Community engagement is meaningful to us. We are pleased when the effort is made and we make the effort and return to attend. ...We've really got to make an effort just to inform the community," she said.

And for Babauta, effort is going all out in utilizing all forms of communication—newspaper ads, radio announcements in all three official languages, radio interviews, articles in newspaper, billboards erected and strategically placed—to inform the CNMI community of meetings related to proposed actions by federal agencies.

Effort is providing accessibility—in terms of time, location, how the meeting will be conducted, how comments will be accepted, the timelines—to ensure that members of the community get to participate.

The legislator also emphasized the importance for the federal agencies to recognize and accept oral comments during public meetings and hearings.

"I really want to emphasize how important that is to us because we are an indigenous community that passed information, stories, knowledge orally from generation to generation. Accepting oral comments was a really crucial part of community participation," she said. "[Also,] consultation does not equal consent. To us, it is only the first part of the process.

At the webinar, the USEPA also pointed out that the Biden administration is focused on advancing environmental justice and climate justice and equity for all, and that underway are executive orders that will direct federal agencies to examine current practices, and figure out and overcome barriers to equity.

Slaughter of dolphins on Faeroes sparks debate on traditions

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—The slaughter of 1,428 white-sided dolphins over the weekend, part of a four-century-old traditional drive of sea mammals into shallow water where they are killed for their meat and blubber, has reignited a debate on the small Faeroe Islands.

The hunt in the North Atlantic islands is not commercial and is authorized, but environmental activists claim it is cruel. Even people in the Faeroes who defend the traditional practice worry that this year's hunt will draw unwanted attention because it was far larger than previous ones and seemingly took place without the usual organization.

Heri Petersen, the foreman of a group that drives pilot whales toward shore on the central Faeroese island of Eysturoy, where the killings took place Sunday, said he was not told about the dolphin drive and "strongly dissociated" himself from it.

He told the news outlet in.fo. that there were too many dolphins and too few people on the beach to slaughter them.

Islanders usually kill up to 1,000 sea mammals annually, according to data kept by the Faeroe Islands. Last year, that included only 35 white-sided dolphins.

Olavur Sjurdarberg, chairman of the Faeroese Pilot Whale Hunt Association, feared Sunday's slaughter would revive the discussion about the sea mammal drives and put a negative spin on the ancient tradition of the 18 rocky islands located halfway between Scotland and Iceland. They are semi-independent and part of the Danish realm.

"We need to keep in mind that we are not alone on earth. On the contrary, the world has become much smaller today, with everyone walking around with a camera in their pocket," Sjurdarberg told local broadcaster KVF. "This is a fabulous treat for those who want us (to look bad) when it comes to pilot whale catching."

Faeroese Fishery Minister Jacob Vestergaard told local radio station Kringvarp Foeroya that everything was done by the book in the dolphin hunt.

Life & Style

Russian film crew in orbit to make first movie in space

MOSCOW (AP)—A Russian actor and a film director rocketed to space Tuesday on a mission to make the world's first movie in orbit, a project the Kremlin said will help burnish the nation's space glory.

Actor Yulia Peresild and director Klim Shipenko blasted off for the International Space Station in a Russian Soyuz spacecraft together with cosmonaut Anton Shkaplerov, a veteran of three space missions. Their Soyuz MS-19 lifted off as scheduled at 1:55 p.m. (0855 GMT) from the Russian space launch facility in Baikonur, Kazakhstan and arrived at the station after about 3½ hours.

Shkaplerov took manual controls to smoothly dock the spacecraft at the space outpost after a glitch in an automatic docking system.

The trio reported they were feeling fine and spacecraft systems were functioning normally.

Peresild and Klimenko are to film segments of a new movie titled "Challenge," in which a surgeon played by Peresild rushes to the space station to save a crew member who needs an urgent operation in orbit. After 12 days on the space outpost, they are set to return to Earth with another Russian cosmonaut.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the mission will help showcase Russia's space prowess.

"We have been pioneers in space and maintained a confident position," Peskov said. "Such missions that help advertise our achievements and space exploration in general are great for the country."

Speaking at a pre-flight news conference Monday, 37-year-old Peresild acknowledged that it was challenging for her to adapt to the strict discipline and rigorous demands during the training.

"It was psychologically, physically and morally hard," she said. "But I think that once we achieve the goal, all that will seem not so difficult and we will remember it with a smile."

Shipenko, 38, who has made several commercially successful movies, also described their fast-track, four-month preparation for the flight as tough.

"Of course, we couldn't make many things at the first try, and sometimes even at a third attempt, but it's normal," he said.

Shipenko, who will complete the shooting on Earth after filming the movie's space episodes, said Shkaplerov and two other Russian cosmonauts now on board the station—Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov—will all play parts in the new movie.

A woman admires, from left, a black and white preparatory cartoon for the St. Peter painting, by Fra Bartolomeo, 1513, the oil on wood painting of St. Peter, by Raffaello, 1517-1518, the oil on wood painting of St. Paul, by Fra Bartolomeo, 1513, and it's black and white preparatory cartoon, by Fra Bartolomeo, 1513-1514, during a press preview of the "St. Peter and St. Paul by Fra Bartolomeo and Raffaello" exhibition, at the Vatican Museums, at the Vatican, Friday, Sept. 24, 2021. AP

Vatican Museums, Uffizi team up to confirm a Raphael is real

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Two of the world's most important art museums, the Vatican Museums and the Uffizi Galleries, joined forces for the first time on Friday to inaugurate a small exhibit of rarely seen works by two Renaissance masters that confirmed a painting long suspected of being by Raphael was indeed his work.

"Saints Peter and Paul by Raphael and Fra Bartlomeo. An homage to the Patrons of Rome," marks the first exhibit for the Vatican Museums in over a year thanks to COVID-19 lockdowns that shuttered galleries precisely at the time that Italy was commemorating the 500th anniversary of Raphael's death with a series of shows.

The nearly life-sized paintings of Saints Peter and Paul are normally kept outside public view in the Papal Audience Apartment of the Apostolic Palace. But they have been restored and are being displayed for the first time alongside their preparatory sketches, usually held in Florence by the Uffizi Galleries, that the Florentine master Fra Bartolemeo made around 1513 after he was commissioned to paint the saints for a Rome church.

BTS campaign with UN nets millions of dollars—and tweets

NEW YORK (AP)—K-pop superstars BTS have raised $3.6 million and generated millions of tweets during four years of teaming up with the U.N. children's agency to fight violence, abuse and bullying and promote self-esteem in young people, the agency is announcing Wednesday.

The "Love Myself" campaign spread its message through means including social media hashtags, merchandise, the South Korean band's 2018-2019 "Love Yourself" world tour and a 2019 video for the children's agency, called UNICEF, urging people to "choose kindness." The "Love Myself" slogan was even emblazoned on dirigibles flown over the musicians' hometowns in 2017.

UNICEF had booths at BTS concerts, and the band members filmed a music video at the U.N. headquarters and repeatedly spoke there, most recently during the General Assembly's annual gathering of world leaders last month. When the coronavirus pandemic forced last year's meeting to be held almost entirely virtually, BTS members spoke by video about how they dealt with the isolation and frustration brought on by pandemic shutdowns.

BTS said in a statement for Wednesday's announcement that the band launched the "Love Myself" campaign to improve other young people's lives but strove to live by it themselves.

"We as a team and as individuals grew, as well," the seven-member band said. "We hope that many people felt how the love received from others can become the power that allows them to love themselves."

The campaign has helped the 76-year-old U.N. cultivate a more youthful image and capture eyeballs outside its usual circles—and inside BTS' fan base, known as the "ARMY."

"Permission to Dance," a BTS music video filmed at the U.N. headquarters and released last month, counts over 27 million views on the U.N.'s YouTube channel, which has about 2 million subscribers. UNICEF says the "Love Myself" initiative spurred nearly 5 million tweets and over 50 million likes, retweets, replies and comments.

"The groundbreaking way in which BTS has helped spark a positive message with its ARMY is simply unmatched and incredibly invaluable," UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore said in a statement.

Girlfriend wants live-in beau to end his marriage

DEAR ABBY: I have been with a man for the last six years. He has been separated for 20 years. When I asked him if he was going to finalize his divorce, he said no. When I said I would like a commitment, he said he gave me one when he moved in five years ago. I said I want more. His wife even asked him for a divorce, but he said it's expensive. I told him by my upcoming 50th birthday I want a yes or no on the divorce. What should I do?

IN LIMBO IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR IN LIMBO: Assuming this man lives with you rent-free, you have spent the last six years with a houseguest who is more concerned with his net worth than your need for validation. If his wife wanted a divorce, it would have happened already, and the issue of property division could have been bifurcated (separated). Obviously, this arrangement is serving them both in some way. Your next step should be to make a final decision about whether the status quo is acceptable to you, because it isn't going to change.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My brother-in-law (age 75) apparently doesn't like kids. He and my sister are childless. He just told my husband that what he doesn't like about our family gatherings is the attention everyone shows my two granddaughters. (They are 7 and 8.) At a recent gathering, he actually threw down game pieces and stomped off when they approached. Should I sever contact with my sister and him? I know if I tell my son about this, my son will cut ties with them. What parent forces their children on anyone who doesn't like them? Your advice might help.

FAMILY GAL IN ALABAMA

DEAR FAMILY GAL: Not everyone relates well to kids. That said, your brother-in-law's behavior was appalling. Have a private talk with your sister. Could HE be entering a second childhood? Knowing how he feels about children, if you wish to see him and your sister, consider socializing with them separately. If other family members with children invite them to anything other than an adults-only gathering, Sissy and her hubby should politely offer their regrets.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have a class reunion coming up and want some advice on how to stop a fellow classmate from giving a religious sermon. I don't want to hurt his feelings, but after the last reunion, several people complained about his lengthy preaching. I'm afraid if it happens again, some people may choose not to attend. How can I tactfully handle this issue? Any help is appreciated.

WANTS TO HAVE A GOOD TIME

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR WANTS: Unfortunately, some people don't know how to let go of a microphone once they have one and aren't able to sense they have lost their audience. Handle this uncomfortable situation by advising all the speakers that their remarks must be limited to no more than three minutes. Of course, if the "sermon" runs long, you will have to step forward and call a halt to it by asking the audience to give the person a big hand to show their appreciation. (If that doesn't do the trick, you may have to resort to a hook.)

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

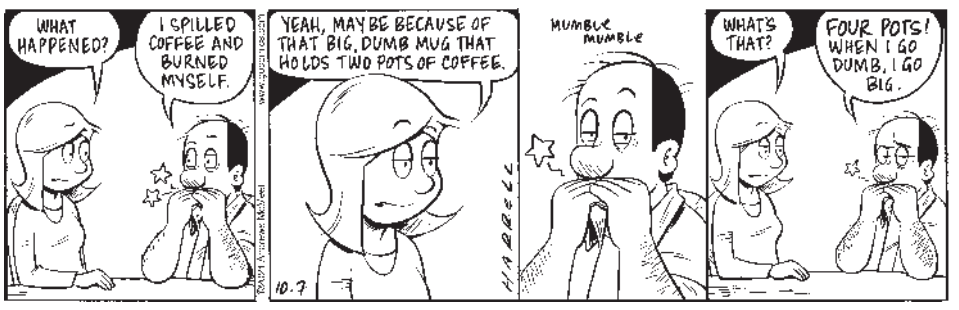
HERE COMES SUSIE.
HA! WON'T SHE BE HORRIFIED TO SEE HOW OUR FACES HAVE TRAGICALLY FROZEN!
HI, SUSIE.
HI, CALVIN.
WHAT DID YOU DO, GET YOUR HEAD STUCK IN THE BLENDER? IT'S AN IMPROVEMENT.
WATTERSON 10-7

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHAT HAPPENED?
I SPILLED COFFEE AND BURNED MYSELF.
YEAH, MAYBE BECAUSE OF THAT BIG, DUMB MUG THAT HOLDS TWO POTS OF COFFEE.
10.7
MUMBLE MUMBLE
WHAT'S THAT?
FOUR POTS! WHEN I GO DUMB, I GO BIG.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HERE YOU GO. EAT UP.
EW. I HATE THIS DISH!
C'MON, THINK OF ALL THE STARVING PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT AIN'T SO BAD IF I PRETEND THEY'RE ALL WATCHING ME EAT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

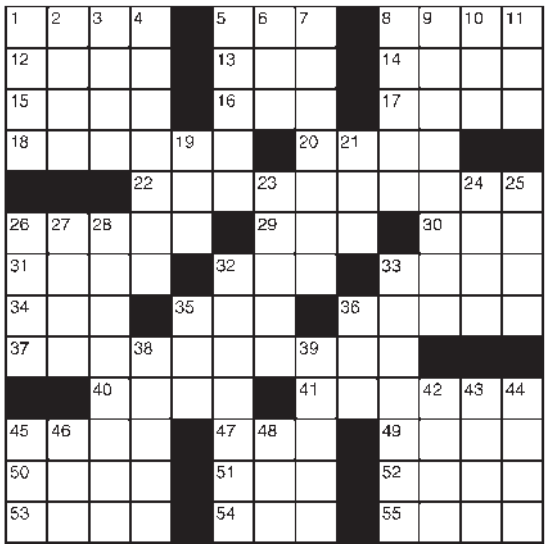
1 Tennis great Steffi
5 Big mouth
8 Queue after Q
12 Bellow
13 Hollywood's Lupino
14 Get wind of
15 Texter's "As I see it"
16 Fish-fowl insert
17 Knitting fiber
18 Outlaw-chasing groups
20 Viral video, e.g.
22 "Relax!"
26 Insertion mark
29 Chef Garten
30 Dean's list stat
31 Pencil filler
32 Identify
33 Bridge coup
34 Gallery display
35 Luau dish
36 Well-versed folks?
37 "Relax!"
40 Mine find
41 Saudi neighbor
45 Russian refusal
47 "Awesome!"
49 Mid-month date
50 Roll call reply
51 Guitar's kin
52 Bart's sister
53 Colleen
54 Standard
55 Trendy low-carb diet

DOWN

1 Clench
2 QB Tony
3 Contented sounds
4 Iced, as a cupcake
5 Capital of Belarus
6 Commotion
7 Heating (up)
8 Limerick feature
9 Erne
10 Sailor
11 Coffee vessel
19 Nosh
21 LAX info
23 "Old MacDonald" refrain
24 Quarrel
25 Orange veggies
26 Family
27 Sleek, in car lingo
28 Noisy snakes
32 Start, as an engine
33 Vegan beverage
35 Group of seals
36 Opposite of "post-"
38 Carries
39 Actress Winona
42 Actress Falco
43 Tree house
44 Golfer Aoki
45 Stanley Cup org.
46 Verily
48 Alias letters

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 10-7



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Shawn Ashmore, 42; Toni Braxton, 54; Simon Cowell, 62; Joy Behar, 79.

Happy Birthday: Set high goals, and stretch your imagination to include things you have only dreamed about doing. You will find a way to far exceed your expectations. Plunge into the unknown, gather information and pour your energy into doing the extraordinary and mastering skills that will help you do and be your very best. Embrace life wholeheartedly. Live, love and laugh. Your numbers are 3, 10, 18, 24, 36, 38, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* You are sitting in a good position. Consider what you want and who you can reach out to for suggestions, information or hands-on help. Partnerships look promising as long as you maintain equality mentally, physically and financially. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* If you want to change, make it happen. Don't wait for others to make the first move. Ask questions, analyze situations and do your best to stabilize conditions that can turn sour quickly. Negotiate with an open mind and respect for others. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Be careful how you express yourself. It's essential to get all the facts before you share if you want to get things right the first time. Verify the information you receive, and be patient when dealing with others. Choose charm over force. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Interacting more with people who come from different backgrounds will help you broaden your point of view and assist you in understanding how best to satisfy everyone's needs. Be the peacemaker, not the troublemaker, and you will gain respect. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Keep talking until you get it right, and convince others to join in and help you reach your goal. Refuse to let what someone does influence or stand in the way of your progress. Partner with those who share your pursuits. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You'll be a bit of a dreamer today. Keep in mind that although dreams can lead to positive outcomes, realism is also required to ensure you aren't trying to do the impossible. Set goals that will bring about change that enhances your life. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* A calculated move will position you exactly where you want to be and help you reinforce your direction and long-term goals. Share feelings with someone you respect, and you'll receive suggestions that will encourage the best outcome. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Pay attention, get information from reliable sources and think twice before you react to domestic situations. It's essential to take care of your responsibilities before someone complains or criticizes you for shortcomings. Uncertainty is a red flag, so sit tight. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Limit your spending to ease stress. You can plan something special for someone you love that doesn't cost a penny. Time spent making plans or committing to a bright future will be worth far more than a lavish gift. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Be aware of what others are doing and saying before making promises you may not want to keep. Do your research, listen carefully and take better care of your physical and emotional well-being. A risk won't be worth the cost involved. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Question an expenditure before putting your money on the table. Use your insight, intelligence and savvy experience to ward off fast-talking sales pitch. Push back if someone tries to take advantage of you. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* A financial change will lead to a more manageable lifestyle and less stress. Be sure to do what's best for you and will add to personal stability and future security. Generosity will buy only fair-weather friends. Be smart and save. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, caring and imaginative. You are unique and entertaining.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

2		3	4			5		
				7	8		9	
			5			3		6
3		5				9		
		8				6		3
7		6			2			
	2		1	3				
		1			9	7		8

Difficulty Level ★★★ 10/07

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	3	5	8	4	6	7	9	1
9	1	8	5	3	7	4	6	2
4	7	6	9	1	2	5	3	8
7	8	2	3	9	1	6	5	4
6	5	9	7	8	4	1	2	3
3	4	1	6	2	5	8	7	9
8	2	7	1	6	9	3	4	5
5	9	3	4	7	8	2	1	6
1	6	4	2	5	3	9	8	7

Difficulty Level ★★★

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

BACCARAT GLASSES **Solution: 8 letters**

S	S	E	H	C	G	O	E	R	I	H	P	P	A	S
R	T	E	C	I	N	G	B	I	R	D	I	C	E	R
R	A	C	F	O	C	O	F	S	S	P	U	I	O	E
L	A	T	E	A	U	L	A	T	S	Y	R	C	W	H
I	S	S	Ⓢ	J	U	P	E	E	A	O	T	I	K	C
E	R	E	Ⓣ	T	B	C	E	J	S	A	N	A	K	T
V	S	S	Ⓔ	C	N	O	C	S	G	E	N	R	L	I
I	R	A	Ⓢ	A	E	O	E	O	R	T	E	E	H	P
T	E	V	R	F	O	C	N	A	I	T	L	G	T	E
A	T	F	A	L	C	I	R	Q	A	E	A	N	A	V
R	N	R	E	A	H	A	U	W	N	S	M	U	E	I
O	A	R	K	P	E	E	S	E	I	H	P	O	R	T
C	C	S	L	L	A	R	E	B	M	A	S	L	W	O
E	E	O	C	E	R	A	W	R	A	B	E	A	R	V
D	D	Y	A	R	T	H	S	A	L	U	X	U	R	Y

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Accessories, Amber, Animal, Antique, Ashtray, Barware, Bear, Bird, Carafe, Case, Chess, Clear, Cooler, Coupes, Crystal, Decanters, Decorative, Desk, Dice, Dolphin, Duck, Flute, France, Gifts, Heart, Jets, Lamps, Logo, Lounge, Luxury, Nice, Objects, Octagon, Pitchers, Rare, Sapphire, Sconces, Sets, Star, Trophies, Tsar, Vase, Veil, Votive, Water, Wine, Wreath

Yesterday's Answer: Crisp

The NEW **Treasury 43** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

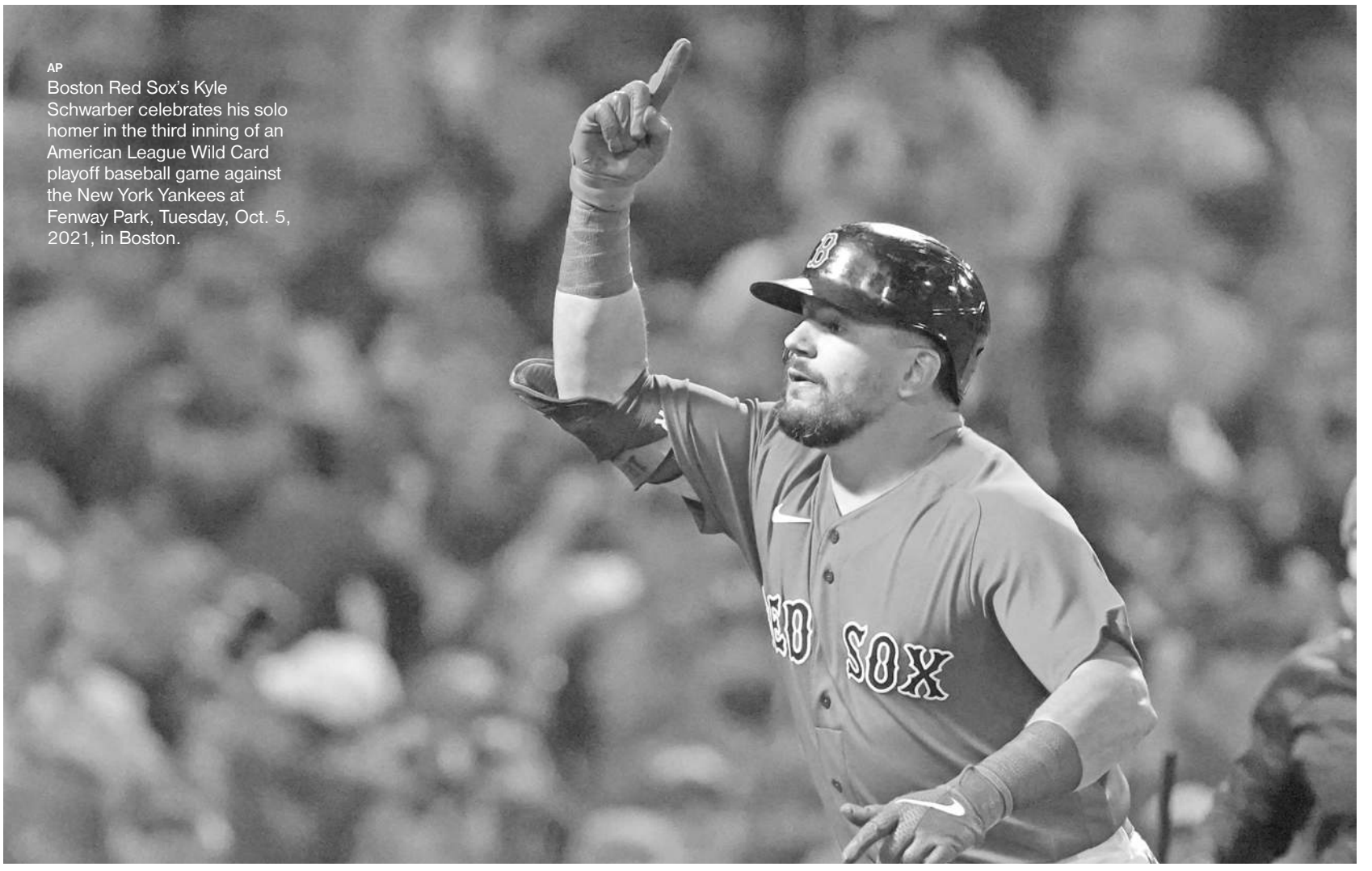
Bogaerts, Red Sox dent Cole, beat Yanks in AL wild-card game

BOSTON (AP)—Xander Bogaerts and Kyle Schwarber homered off Yankees ace Gerrit Cole, and Nathan Eovaldi took a shutout into the sixth inning to help the Boston Red Sox beat New York 6-2 Tuesday night in the AL wild-card game.

Bogaerts also made a perfect relay to throw out Aaron Judge at the plate when the game was still close, sending the Red Sox into the AL Division Series against the Tampa Bay Rays. Game 1 in the best-of-five matchup is Thursday night in St. Petersburg, Florida.

With Bucky Dent in the crowd and Aaron Boone in the Yankees dugout, Boston chased Cole in the third inning and beat New York in the playoffs for the third straight time. The Yankees, who lead the majors with 27 World Series championships, have not won it all since 2009.

A year after baseball took its postseason into neutral site bubbles to protect against the pandemic, a sellout crowd of 38,324 -- the biggest of the year—filled Fenway Park to rekindle one of the sport's most passionate rivalries. Enough Yankee fans were among them to fuel a raucous back-and-forth of insulting chants.



AP
Boston Red Sox's Kyle Schwarber celebrates his solo homer in the third inning of an American League Wild Card playoff baseball game against the New York Yankees at Fenway Park, Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021, in Boston.

It was the fifth playoff matchup between the long-time foes, with Boston taking a 3-2 edge. That doesn't count the 1978 AL East tiebreaker—technically regular season Game No. 163—that the Yankees won thanks to Dent's homer into the net above the Green Monster.

Boone, the former infielder who is now the Yankees manager, added to the heartbreak with his 11th-inning walk-off homer in Game 7 of the 2003 AL Championship Series.

The Red Sox haven't lost to them since.

They got their revenge the next year when they rallied after losing the first three games of the ALCS to eliminate the Yankees, then went on to win their first World Series title in 86 years. They won three more Series, in '07, '13 and in '18 when they knocked out the Yankees in the divisional round.

And any lingering pain disappeared into the center field bleachers in the first inning on Tuesday night.

Unlike Dent, who barely cleared the left-field wall that sits just 310 feet from home plate, Bogaerts drilled a line drive 427 feet to straightaway center. And unlike Carlton Fisk, who contorted his body to will the ball fair in Game 6 of the 1975 World Series, Bogaerts interrupted his home run trot only to flex for the Red Sox dugout.

Cole was pulled after he allowed Schwarber's third-inning solo shot and put two more men on with nobody out. In all, he was charged with three runs on four hits and two walks, striking out three in two-plus innings.

Eovaldi only allowed two hits through five innings before giving up a solo home run to Anthony Rizzo -- Schwarber's teammate on the 2016 Cubs championship team -- that sparked the first excited cheers from the Yankees fans in the crowd.

After an infield single by Aaron Judge, Ryan Brasier relieved Eovaldi and gave up a wall single to Giancarlo Stanton. Mistakenly waved home by third base coach Phil Nevin, Judge was easily thrown out at the plate—8-6-2—by the team that led the majors with 43 outfield assists during the season. (The Yankees made 22 outs at home this season, tied for the most in baseball.)

In all, Eovaldi allowed one run on four hits in 5 1/3 innings, striking out eight. Alex Verdugo doubled in one run in the sixth to make it 4-1 and then singled in two more in the seventh to give Boston a 6-1 lead.

Stanton, who singled high off the wall early, hit a solo homer in the ninth.

The teams swapped places twice in the last 10 days of the season, starting with the Yankees' three-game sweep in Boston Sept. 24-26 that moved them into the first wild-card spot. At one point, Major League Baseball ran through the tiebreaker scenarios and the Yankees had to choose whether they would want to play in Boston or Toronto to break a four-way tie.

They chose Boston.

Although the tiebreakers weren't necessary when both teams finished ahead of Toronto and Seattle -- with identical 92-70 records, Boston earned home-field by virtue of a 10-9 head-to-head record -- word of the Yankees' decision inevitably made it to the Red Sox clubhouse.

"We knew about it. We don't really talk about it because we had some business to take care of ourselves," Red Sox center fielder Kiké Hernandez said before the game. "They wanted us and they got us now, so win or go home. That's it."

Wily veterans Wainwright, Scherzer meet in NL wild-card game

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Two wily veterans on the mound in an elimination game. Adam Wainwright starting for the reinvigorated St. Louis Cardinals against the Los Angeles Dodgers' Max Scherzer, pitching as well as he ever has.

"It's as fun as it gets, right?" Wainwright said, smiling.

Indeed, though neither team wanted to be in the position of playing in the NL wild-card game.

The Cardinals (90-72) rode a 17-game winning streak into the second wild-card spot.

The Dodgers' mark of 106-56 was the second-best in baseball behind the rival San Francisco Giants (107-55), who ended LA's streak of eight straight NL West titles on the final day of the regular season.

The relative absurdity of the defending World Series champions having to play a dangerous wild-card game after winning that many games doesn't bother Scherzer. LA's record is the best of any defending World Series champion since 1969, when divisional play began.

"There's no crying in baseball," he said. "You have to win your division. We didn't win our division."

So, here they are.

Wainwright (17-7) faces Scherzer (15-4) at Dodger Stadium on Wednesday night, where the Dodgers ended the regular season on a franchise-record 15-game home winning streak. Their 53-28 home record was tops in the majors.

It's just the second winner-take-all game in postseason history with two starting pitchers aged 37-plus. Wainwright is 40; Scherzer is 37.

Both pitchers hardly represent the over-the-hill gang. They're fit and bring an intensity to the hill that rivals any of their younger teammates.

"I'm still a pretty young fella," Wainwright insists.

Wainwright said he felt "way older" a few years ago, causing him to change his diet and eliminate gluten, sugar, dairy and processed foods for a while. He changed his workout and conditioning programs, too.

"If you buy into the fact that you're old, then you are," he said. "I don't still try to touch the ceiling in the weight room every single day like I used to, but occasionally you need to do that to keep yourself young. It's that fine line of staying young but also staying smart, trying to balance that."

Scherzer admits his diet isn't the greatest, although he, too, tries to avoid sugar.

"I can't say I've made too many changes," he said. "To me, it's just listen to your body. Train the hardest you can to where your body is at."

The two have squared off once before in the postseason.

Scherzer and the Washington Nationals beat Wainwright and the Cardinals in Game 2 of the 2019 NL Championship Series. Scherzer allowed one hit over seven scoreless innings; Wainwright allowed three runs in 7 1/3. Both had 11 strikeouts.

Scherzer is 7-0 with a 1.98 ERA since joining the Dodgers from Washington, along with NL batting champion Trea Turner, at the July trade deadline. The three-time Cy Young Award winner is from the St. Louis suburb of Chesterfield.

Scherzer had a combined 236 strikeouts between the Dodgers and Nationals; Wainwright had 174.

Wainwright has an enviable 28-15 record with a 2.89 ERA in the postseason.

"He's the godfather," teammate Nolan Arenado said. "I look at him like a dad in a sense."

None of the Dodgers know Scherzer as well as Turner. They were tight in Washington and the bond has carried over to laid-back LA.

"He's already angry," Turner said of Scherzer a few days ago. "He's going to be the same guy, same intensity. Just do what he does."

While a sellout crowd rides the emotional roller coaster of an elimination game, Scherzer will stay well within himself.

"Never let the situation get to you," he said. "Always just worry about the next pitch."

Wainwright is prepared for anything, remembering that some of the best games he's pitched in the postseason were losses.

"My two biggest complete jokes we won both of them," he said. "Anything can happen in one game. It is a harsh atmosphere out there."

Scherzer's borderline hostility on the mound fits whatever chaos is going on around him.

"That's what you play the game for is to be able to win the World Series," he said. "We have to win tomorrow, there's no ifs, ands or buts about it."

Joked Wainwright, "I'm just going to throw fastballs right down the middle."

Veteran Pau Gasol announces retirement from basketball

MADRID (AP)—Wishing his "older brother" Kobe Bryant could be there by his side, Pau Gasol finally put an end to a basketball career that went "way beyond my dreams and expectations."

Gasol announced his retirement from basketball on Tuesday after a career that lasted more than two decades and earned him two NBA titles and a world championship gold with Spain's national team.

"In the end, playing until the age of 41, with everything that I have done, I think that's not bad," Gasol said. "I'm very pleased and very grateful for having the career that I had and for receiving so much affection and support."

Gasol had already announced his farewell from international basketball in August after Spain lost to the United States in the quarterfinals of the Tokyo Games, which marked his fifth Olympics.

Gasol had been with Spanish club Barcelona since February. His career had stalled before that because a left-foot injury that lingered and kept him from playing for nearly two years.

AP

Los Angeles Lakers' Pau Gasol (16), of Spain, dunks as San Antonio Spurs' Manu Ginobili, left, of Argentina, looks on during the second half of Game 5 of the NBA Western Conference basketball finals in Los Angeles, in this Thursday, May 29, 2008, file photo.

"I'm going to retire from professional basketball," Gasol said. "It's a difficult decision after so many years, but it's a decision that I really thought over."

The retirement announcement was made in an event at a opera house in Barcelona attended by former teammates and family members, including his wife, young daughter and younger brother Marc.

Gasol got choked up when mentioning someone who was missing — Bryant, his former Los Angeles Lakers teammate, who died in a helicopter crash last year.

"I really would have liked for him to be here," Gasol said. "Sometimes life can be very unfair and we miss him and his daughter 'Gigi' a great deal. He taught me how to be a better leader, a better competitor. He showed me what it meant to be a winner. I have always considered him my older brother, so thank you, Kobe."

Gasol said it was a risk to keep playing because his fractured foot could get worse and he could "only be able to swim and ride a bicycle for the rest of" his life. He said he had "the desire to be more at home, to spend more time doing other things."

Gasol said he did everything possible to return from the foot injury and was glad to be able to fulfill his dream of playing in front of his daughter.

"It's been one of the most beautiful periods of my career," he said. "And to play again with the Spanish national team was something very special. We weren't able to come away with a medal (at the Tokyo Olympics), but just being able to play was a great success for me."

Gasol won two NBA titles with the Lakers, in 2009 and 2010, and averaged 17 points and 9.2 rebounds in 1,226 regular-season games with five NBA teams, playing as a center and power forward. His other teams were the Memphis Grizzlies, Chicago Bulls, San Antonio Spurs and Milwaukee Bucks. He was the No. 3 pick in the 2001 NBA draft, being selected by Atlanta and traded to Memphis.

Gasol last played in the NBA with the Bucks in 2019. He signed with the Portland Trail Blazers that year but never got to play.

Gasol won a world championship title with Spain in 2006, in addition to European titles in 2009, 2011 and 2015.

He helped Spain win Olympic silver medals in 2008 in Beijing and 2012 in London, as well as a bronze in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro.

Gasol recently won an election to represent athletes for the next seven years at the International Olympic Committee. He joined an IOC membership list drawn variously from European and Middle East royal families, international sports bodies, business leaders and 12 athletes elected by their peers.

Gasol said he had been preparing for life after retirement for a while and will start new projects that will include work with his foundation, the IOC and with UNICEF.

He said he may go into consultancy and the executive world, and has already started contacting some NBA teams to discuss ideas.

"I tried to be the best I could, but if you take on that role of being a leader, you have to take on certain responsibilities and that is what I want to do," Gasol said. "I want to give back to the sport and to society everything they've given to me."

Irving misses 1st practice after Nets return to New York

NEW YORK (AP)—Kyrie Irving didn't practice with the Brooklyn Nets on Tuesday, again remaining away from the team amid questions about his availability to play in New York because of the city's vaccine mandate.

Coach Steve Nash said he had no further update about the status of his All-Star guard.

"We support him, we're here for him. When things change and there's a resolution, we're here for him," Nash said.

Irving hasn't said if he has been vaccinated against COVID-19, asking for privacy when pressed about his status during the team's media day on Sept. 27. He wasn't with his teammates that day at Barclays Center, instead appearing via Zoom.

New York has a mandate requiring COVID-19 vaccinations for athletes who play in or practice in the city.

The Nets held training camp last week in San Diego, with Irving present and practicing, and they ran their first practice at their training facility in Brooklyn on Tuesday with everyone except Irving.

Nash said he wasn't concerned about not being able to have his full team together, two weeks before the Nets play the NBA's season-opening game at the reigning champion Milwaukee Bucks.

"We're just trying to work every day," Nash said. "So we came in today and had a great practice and we'll do the same tomorrow and that's kind of where I'll leave it."

The NBA doesn't require players to be vaccinated, but those who aren't face frequent coronavirus testing and severe restrictions on their activities. Players in New York and San Francisco, which has a similar mandate soon going into effect, won't be paid for the games they miss.

The New York Knicks have said their entire team is vaccinated and Andrew Wiggins recently became the last of the Golden State Warriors to get a shot, leaving Irving as the lone player potentially facing a pay cut for virus reasons.

Nash frequently pointed to a lack of practice time last season as a problem for the Nets, with the condensed schedule and coronavirus testing forcing them instead to often opt for rest when they could get it.

He said the team won't consider holding practice outside the city, even if it would ensure the entire roster would be available.

"No, this is our home and this is where we're going to practice and we have almost the whole group," Nash said. "So that's a positive and we're just working at getting better every day and focusing on the things we can control."

AP

Brooklyn Nets guard Kyrie Irving (11) shoots against the Milwaukee Bucks during the second half of Game 1 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in New York, in this Saturday, June 5, 2021, file photo.

Bucks-Grizzlies game suspended after fire alarm evacuation

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—The exhibition game between the Milwaukee Bucks and Memphis Grizzlies was suspended after three quarters Tuesday night when a fire alarm went off, leading to evacuation of FedExForum.

At the time of the delay, the Grizzlies were leading 87-77 in the preseason opener for both teams.

Officials said the problem was a false alarm caused by a sprinkler in a non-public area. The delay was slightly more than an hour after the alarm sounded and the game was called.

"With the lengthy delay, the league, in consultation with the Bucks and the Grizzlies, has determined not to complete the game in the interest of player safety," the NBA announced.

All of the fans were cleared from the building when the alarm sounded as officials tried to determine the next move. At one point, not long after the teams left the floor, Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer headed across the court, suitcase in tow. Little-by-little other Bucks players and staff members, some carrying pans of food for the postgame meal, headed out of the building.

Though the team waited until the official word before leaving, it was questionable after the significant delay whether the teams would return given what it would take for players to get ready for another 12 minutes of basketball.

"A very unique experience tonight," Grizzlies coach Taylor Jenkins said. "No one could have foreshadowed that that would have happened. Great collaboration between both teams and the league. A lot of dialogue. And it was definitely unique."

28 named to North Pacific Regional Championships

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Chung

Kadokura

Sikkel

Woo

Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association has named the CNMI team that will see action in the 2022 North Pacific Regional Championships in Guam.

The junior netters that have been named to the Commonwealth team are Jimin Woo, Andy Kim, Ji Hwan "Sam" Ryu, and Sean Lee in the boys 18 division.

The boys 16 division will then have David Kwon, Cody Shimizu, Min Seoung Kim, and Daniel Kang, while the girls 16 division will have Serin Chung, Hye Jin Elliot, Seiyul Hong, and Yebin Shin.

The boys 14 will feature June Yu, Wataru Kadokura, Simon Tang, and Henry Choi. The girls 14 division, meanwhile, includes Irin Chung, Hoo Wang, Savita Sikkel, and Ji Eun "Anna" Kwon.

Making the team in the boys 12 are Nason Wessel, Si Woo Lee, Yutaka Kadokura, and Ki Won Lee with Hannah Chae, Lina Tsukagoshi, Anne Lee, and Jeong Bin Park representing the CNMI in the girls 12.

While the team's composition has been made, there's still no definite date when the 2022 North Pacific Regional Championships will finally push through in the U.S. territory.

After being cancelled altogether last year, the competition was originally scheduled for June this year, but was postponed to September because of Guam's increasing cases of COVID-19. It was pushed back anew from September to November last month, as COVID-19 cases in the neighboring island showed no signs of slowing down.

CNMI junior players that get to go to the North Pacific Regional Championships are determined by their junior ranking that NMITA keeps tabs on. Winners of the NPRC will then go on to compete in the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Lautoka, Fiji. Albeit, due to the multiple postponements a trip to the South Pacific late in the year is still a big question mark.

NMI

From Page 20

would move the squad to No. 4 in the final standings, while a loss or draw would relegate the team to No. 5.

The Old B Bank completes the field and failed to win a single game this season, as it lost nine matches and had one draw.

Meanwhile, the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association is calling all interested teams to submit entries for the MSL and MSL 2 Fall Season 2021. Today is the deadline to submit entries.

Home not so sweet in NFL this season despite return of fans

By JOSH DUBOW
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

The fans are back, the crowds are loud, but home-field advantage still isn't a factor early this NFL season.

Road teams have won 33 of the 64 games over the first four weeks, extending a trend that began in 2019 and continued through the pandemic-impacted 2020 season when games were played with few, if any, fans.

The .484 winning percentage for home teams is the sixth-worst since the merger through four weeks of game action. This is the third straight season that home teams failed to have a winning record through four weeks, something that hadn't happened before that since 1983.

Since the beginning of the 2019 season, road teams are 284-290-2 for a .495 winning percentage.

There was some expectation that would change this season when road teams would once again have to deal with loud crowds that forced silent counts and made running offense more difficult. But that hasn't contributed to more home wins.

Perhaps no team has exemplified the home-field woes more than the San Francisco 49ers the past two years. San Francisco is 1-6 at Levi's Stadium in that span, lost all three games as the designated "home team" in Arizona when they relocated last year because of COVID-19 protocols, and is 7-3 in true road games.

The Niners look to improve to 3-0 on the road this season when they travel to Arizona this week. Denver also puts its 2-0 road mark on the line this week at Pittsburgh.

ROOKIE REVIEW

After a rough start to the 2021 season for the heralded rookie QB class, there was some signs of progress in Week 4.

Chicago's Justin Fields and Zach Wilson of the Jets came out on the winning side last week, marking the first time this season a rookie QB won a game started against a non-rookie. It also marked the first time since Week 3 in the 2019 season that two rookie QBs earned their first win in the same week. Daniel Jones and Gardner Minshew did it that week.

San Francisco's Trey Lance also got his most extensive action when Jimmy Garoppolo left at halftime with a calf injury and threw for two TD passes in the second half in a loss to Seattle.

New England's Mac Jones went toe-to-toe with Tom Brady and Tampa Bay before falling just short at the end because of a missed field goal, and Jacksonville's Trevor Lawrence had his most efficient game of the season before falling to Cincinnati.

ALL

From Page 20

silver for second, and bronze for third.

"We will also have individual medals for the Top 3 finishers in each category," he said.

Like last week's final qualifier, Saipan Vegas will again serve as the venue for this Saturday's cross country championships.

"The course will take place on the beautiful Saipan Vegas golf course. The elementary school runners will charge down the fairway and return to a large 250m loop to finish their 1.3-kilometer course. Middle and high school will run over a longer and more scenic 2.5K loop. Middle school [runners] will complete one loop and high school [runners]will complete two loops in order to determine who will be the champions this year," he said.

Unlike the qualifiers, the PSS/NMA Cross Country Championships this Saturday will have the 14U and the 18U divisions start off first at 6:30am. They will be followed by the 12U division at 7:15am. Check-time across all age divisions is 6am. The awards ceremony will begin at 7:45am.

NMA has characterized the Saipan Vegas venue as a fast, manicured course looping through fairways and next to putting greens, offering easy cross country and off-road running. It also has slight hills, paved and grass paths that are suitable for spikes if you remain off the paved paths.

The Public School System has partnered with Northern Marianas Athletics, the governing body of athletics in the CNMI, to organize track and field as well as cross country events in the 2021-22 school year.

Registration for the 2021 PSS/NMA Cross Country Championships can be accessed via the PSS Shared Drive.

BABAUTA

From Page 20

and VIPs. Hotel gyms, function rooms, and their amenities will be heavily used."

He said athletes and officials will start arriving as early as June 15, 2022 and the latest departure date is June 28, 2022. "So basically it'll be an average of 10 days.

To this end, the Mini Games organizing committee CEO extended his thanks to the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands for its recent monetary donation for the islands' hosting of the Mini Games.

"I will also like to recognize HANMI for their donation of $12,000 from their last golf tournament. Thank you HANMI!" he said.

In terms of transportation, Babauta said the Mini Games organizing committee has conscripted the Public School System's fleet of school buses as well as the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority to ferry athletes from the designated hotels to the sports venues and back.

"Our PSS bus fleet will be the main transports for our athletes. COTA will also serve as the mode of commute between venues using fix stop along Beach Road," said Babauta, who added that car rental companies will also be tapped for Mini Games officials and other VIPs.

Since he was already speaking to business leaders at the Chamber meeting, he shared that the Mini Games organizing committee is confident that the CNMI's hosting of the Mini Games will stimulate the local economy.

"All athletes, team officials, and Pacific Games officials from the moment they land on Saipan will be staying an average of 10 days each….availing themselves of our islands' rich culture and heritage and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars throughout Saipan, Tinian, and Rota," he said.

Businesses that are expected to take advantage of the influx of close to 2,000 athletes and officials for the Mini Games include catering services, food and beverage companies, telecoms that offer cell phone cards, retail and gift shops, and entertainment, just to name a few. A number of "adventurous" athletes and officials are also expected to take advantage of optional tours on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, which will certainly be a boon to local tour companies that have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Babauta also took the opportunity to pitch to Chamber members the sponsorship packets the organizing committee will be offering for next year's Mini Games.

"We are unveiling our Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 Sponsorship Booklet for your business opportunity. We understand the current business environment and we are open for pledges, commitment with payment plans, and we value always in-kind [sponsorships] either services, products, or resources."

He said being a sponsor for the 2022 Mini Games comes with a lot of benefits, including a chance to showcase a company's corporate social responsibility to delegates from visiting nations. It also provides invaluable branding exposure to a prestigious event in television and social media and new marketing opportunities to present product and services before, during, and after the Mini Games. Babauta added that sponsorships will instill pride in employees knowing that their company is part of the historic event.

Bogaerts, Red Sox dent Cole, beat Yanks in AL wild-card game

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

28 named to North Pacific Regional Championships

PAGE 19

NMI U18 completes season sweep

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, the NMI Boys U18's Akira Kadokura, Brian Lubao, and Richard Steele keep a close eye on Paire Football Club's Travis Spaeth during their game in the Marianas Soccer League Summer Season last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The NMI Boys U18 National Team won its last two games of the season for an undefeated record in the Marianas Soccer League Summer Season.

The NMI U18 first downed TanHoldings Football Club, 4-0, last Thursday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville and then completed the sweep with a similar shutout win versus Paire Football Club last Sunday, 3-0. The NMI U18 earned a 10-0-0 win-draw-loss record to rule the six-team competition.

Against TanHoldings, Dylan Mister, Kaden Church, Markus Toves, and Dev Bachani teamed up for the NMI U18. Mister scored first in the 13th minute, while Church, Toves, and Bachani all made it to the board in the second half, as they hit their target in the 64th, 76th, and 89th minute, respectively.

Toves and Church also delivered for the NMI U18 in their last game of the season with the former converting his shot in the 88th and the latter in the 64th. Kohtaro Goto posted the other goal for the NMI U18 when he scored in the ninth minute.

Paire, after losing to the NMI U18, finished the season in second place with its 8-0-2 mark, while TanHoldings (5-0-4) has already secured the third spot regardless of the results of its last game in the tournament against Kanoa FC (2-1-6) tonight.

TanHoldings got win No. 5 after a victory via forfeiture against MP United (3-0-7), which is in fourth place, but could still drop to fifth depending on the results of the Kanoa-TanHoldings tiff.

Kanoa has a 2-1-6 mark and will play TanHoldings in a make-up game. A Kanoa win

See NMI on Page 19

Babauta: We will be the best hosts ever

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

With 254 days to go before the start of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022, organizing committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta gave members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce an update on the

» Over 1,800 athletes, officials to stay at hotels

CNMI's hosting preparations yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

The biggest takeaway from Babauta's presentation is that the Commonwealth's hosting of over 1,800 athletes and officials is expected to be the most comfortably ever in terms of accommodations in the history of the Mini Games. This is because instead of an athletes village the organizing committee has arranged for athletes and officials to be billeted in the CNMI's several luxury hotels.

"First time in history that we will be having our athletes at the hotel, ever. We will be the best hosts ever!" said Babauta. "There will be approximately 600 rooms available for the athletes and 200 rooms for officials, technical support,

See BABAUTA on Page 19

MARK RABAGO
Northern Marianas Pacific Games 2022 organizing committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta was the guest speaker during the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's monthly meeting yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

2021 all schools cross country championships this Saturday

MARK RABAGO
From left, Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr., Kagman High School track and field coach Nick Brennfleck, and Northern Marianas Athletics cross country director Ron Snyder during last Saturday's final PSS/NMA Cross Country Qualifier at the old Saipan Country Club golf course behind Saipan Vegas.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Cross country season will conclude this Saturday when the 2021 PSS/NMA Cross Country Championships will be held at the old Saipan Country Club golf course behind Saipan Vegas.

Northern Marianas Athletics cross country director Ron Snyder said the Top 6 eligible students from each competing school in the CNMI will get the chance to run in the 2021 all schools cross country championships.

"To be eligible, students had to compete in and finish one of the season meets. The winners this week will be determined by the combined scores of the Top 4 finishers on each team. They will be added together and the school with the low score in each category will take home the trophy for school year 2021," he said.

At stake for this year's cross country championships is a perpetual plaque awarded to the winning school in each category—elementary boys and girls, middle school boys and girls, and high school boys and girls.

While team competition for cross country will have special emphasis this year, Snyder assured that individual performances would still be rewarded in the cross country championships—gold medal for first place,

See ALL on Page 19